THE NEW WORLD OF THE SOUTH

W·H·FITCHETT

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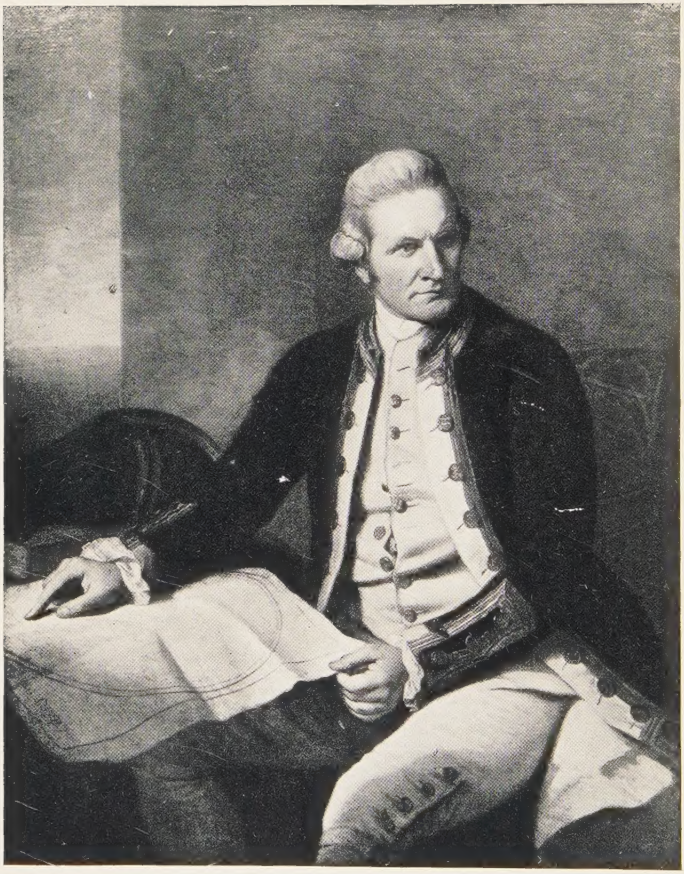

CAPTAIN COOK

From a painting by NATHANIEL DANCE, R.A., in Greenwich Hospital

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THE NEW WORLD OF THE SOUTH

AUSTRALIA IN THE MAKING

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"HOW ENGLAND SAVED EUROPE," "DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE"
"THE GREAT DUKE," ETC.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE

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FOREWORD

It is the fashion to say that Australia as yet has no history, or, at least, none worth writing. It is too young—not to say too insignificant—and its records are distressingly tame. It has known no serious political struggles; the sound of a hostile shot has never been heard in its waters or along its shores. It is taken for granted that there *can* be no gleams of the picturesque in a tale so brief, and of tints so sober! And it may be frankly admitted that the story of Australia *is* both tame and juvenile when compared with that of the other great dominions within the circle of the Empire.

The story of India—or of Canada, or of the Cape—has its roots in great and far-off events: and the tale when told runs through centuries. The origin of these great provinces of the Empire is wrapped up in the issues, one or other, of those wars which filled the eighteenth century with their resounding tumult. Macaulay, in one of his curiously picturesque sentences, discussing the invasion of Silesia by Frederick the Great, says: "In order that he might rob a neighbour whom he promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other on the great lakes of North America." That sentence, of course, has even less of sober truth in it than most epigrams contain. It inverts cause and effect. War

raged in India and America, not "in order" that Prussians might overthrow Austrians in Central Europe, but as a result of the fact that those two nations and their allies *were* wrestling together for victory.

Seeley, who loves—sometimes not wisely but too well—a spacious generalisation, says that all the European wars of the eighteenth century had, in the last analysis, a common purpose. Each was a phase of the stupendous duel for the new world — the wrestle betwixt Greater Britain and Greater France for the prize of a Colonial Empire. Great battles, he thinks, were fought on the Rhine and the Danube to determine which nation should own the Mississippi, or be supreme on the Ganges. Even Napoleon was aiming at Calcutta when he hutted his invading army at Boulogne; he fought his way into Vienna or Berlin, because through it lay the road to Quebec or to Bombay.

This, again, is an over-statement. The vision of the actors in those obstinate and bloody wars did not extend beyond the foes immediately in their front. Not many even of the statesmen of the eighteenth century had any adequate sense of the remoter issues wrapped up in the conflict. Chatham, it is true, saw further than most. He would conquer America, he said, in Germany; but few statesmen of his day—or of any day—had his wizard-like vision. Yet it is historically true that the wars of the eighteenth century determined that India and Canada and the Cape—and many an island group—should be British, and not French or Dutch. As a result, what a picturesque history that, say, of India is, from Clive at Plassey to Henry Lawrence at Lucknow! Or that of Canada, with

Wolfe and Montcalm struggling together on the Plains of Abraham; or that of the Cape, from the story of its capture in 1795, its return to the Dutch in 1802, and final capture in 1805 down to Majuba and Paardeberg!

There are no "drums and tramplings" of this sort in Australian history. It is, from the military point of view, drab-coloured and unpicturesque. Above all, it is short. Little more than a century stretches betwixt 1788, when Phillip with his tiny squadron, and its strange human freight, dropped anchor in Botany Bay, and 1901, when the Australian Commonwealth was proclaimed. And a century in the history of a nation is but the tick of a clock.

Yet, as a matter of fact, the story of Australia is, from some points of view, curiously interesting. It offers the spectacle of the evolution of a nation, lying so near to us in time that the process can be studied with scientific minuteness, and as under the lens of a microscope. And the factors, if not the events, are on a great scale. The stage is an entire continent. For Australia offers the only instance in history where a whole continent has flying above it the flag of a single people. And this is a continent with the climate of Italy, with more than the mineral wealth of Peru, and as fit to be the granary of the world of to-day as Egypt was for the world of the Cæsars.

It is a land, it may be added, as fair as it is rich. Australia, it is true, might almost bring an action for libel against her own poets. It is the fashion amongst most of them to be as "melancholy" as Shakespeare's Jaques. They love to pitch their songs about Australia in the minor key. Its forests, they declare, are

melancholy; its birds are songless; and when Nature sprinkled its monotonous plains with flowers, she did it with a reluctant hand, and forgot to add perfume.

But a generalisation, when stretched to cover a continent, is apt to crack. Nature has her equities; if she denies some things, she gives others. It is true that there are nowhere to be found under Australian skies great mountain ranges like the Alps, with their white coronets of snow, and flanks mail-clad with glaciers. But beauty is given to Australian landscapes in other terms.

For Nature has her compensations. The horizon curves round an Australian landscape with an azure so exquisite, a sapphire so perfect—borrowed from some relation of sun and atmosphere—as can hardly be seen anywhere else in the world. And if Australia has no Alps, yet an artist may go far, and see many lands, before seeing anything fairer than, say, the western district of Victoria: the far-stretching plain, rich in lakes and strewn with round volcanic hills, set apart from each other, and each, as seen in distance, a perfect cone of blue. The undulating wheat-lands of South Australia, fresh from the hand of Nature, and ready for the plough, have—as the day breaks, or as the sun sets over them—a grace which the naked prairies of Canada, sea-like in their vastness—but sea-like, too, in their monotony—certainly do not possess.

Are Australian birds songless? The present writer has heard the nightingale lament in an Italian twilight; and he has heard the lark—it was Shelley's lark!—sing above a Devonshire valley, while a brook—Tennyson's brook!—sang at his feet; but for resonant, far-running

and thrilling sweetness, an Australian magpie, heard in the keen air of a spring morning, is equal to either. The non-deciduous trees of Australia cannot vie, in leafy wealth, with, say, an English chestnut-tree, which crowds into three months the verdure an Australian tree spreads over twelve. But does an Australian forest lack grandeur? The eucalyptus of the Cape Otway Ranges, for height of trunk and majesty of foliage, can challenge any tree the planet carries. No cedar on the Lebanon hills can surpass it. A Queensland hill-slope of blue-gums, again, might stir a very dull imagination. The great trees are:

> "Ivory pillars; their smooth, fine slope
> Dappled with delicate heliotrope."

And seen at night, and under a full moon, the "heliotrope" of the great columns becomes milk-white; and the ranked trees—tall, stately, majestic—recall the white and pillared majesty of the Parthenon. A later and younger Australian poet, Miss Dorothea Mackellar, in the London *Spectator*, takes up the artistic defence of the whole colour-scheme of Australia. She tells her over-seas critics:

> "Here dwells a beauty you have not seen.
> . . . . . .
> Amber sunshine and smoke-blue shade,
> Opal colours that glow and fade.
> On the gold of the upland grass
> Blue cloud-shadows that swiftly pass;
> Wood-smoke blown in an azure mist,
> Hills of tenuous amethyst . . .
> Oft the colours are pitched so high
> The deepest note is the cobalt sky.
> We have to wait till the sunset comes
> For shades that feel like the beat of drums

Or like organ-notes in their rise and fall—
Purple and orange and cardinal,
Or the peacock-green that turns soft and slow
To peacock-blue as the great stars show . . .

. . . . . .

Grey of the twisted mulga roots,
Golden bronze of the budding shoots;
Tints of the lichens that cling and spread,
Nile-green, primrose, and palest red. . . .

Fawn and pearl of the lyre-bird's train,
Sheen of the bronze-wing, blue of the crane;
Cream of the plover, grey of the dove;
These are the hues of the land I love!"

Australia, it may be added, is—with the exception of New Zealand—the only great province in the Empire occupied by men of a purely British stock. In Canada, two-fifths are French; at the Cape, one-third is Dutch; in India, the British are but a tiny garrison ruling nearly 300,000,000 coloured men. The very happiest example of the colonising genius of the British race, again, is to be seen in the brief history of Australia. Its story, as it happens, begins at the moment when Great Britain, by the loss of the Thirteen Colonies, had been taught the secret—as no other nation in history has ever learned it—of erecting remote settlements into communities with the freedom of independent States, and yet linked to the Motherland by the tie of an absolute loyalty. As thus read, the story of Australia is a revelation of the political temper and genius of the British race. It certainly represents an experiment which, so far, has succeeded brilliantly.

A community has been evolved set in conditions so happy—at once so sheltered from external pressure,

and so absolutely free to seek its own ideals—that it forms a kind of sociological laboratory with, for the most part, the equable temperature—if not always the scientific intelligence and methods—of a laboratory. And if its experiments sometimes amuse, they sometimes, too, instruct the rest of the world.

And how Australia, under these conditions, has grown! The contrast in scale and wealth betwixt that strange cluster of "pilgrim fathers" which Phillip landed in Botany Bay in 1788, and the six States, with their separate Parliaments and great cities, which, by the Queen's proclamation of 1901, were united to form the Australian Commonwealth, is simply amazing. To-day, 1912, the annual revenue of the Australian States and Commonwealth together exceeds £55,000,000. This is more than four times the revenue of the United Kingdom in 1750, seven years before Plassey was won. It is equal to the revenue of Great Britain in 1810, the very year of Busaco, and five years after Trafalgar, when England had made herself supreme on the sea, and was holding Portugal against Napoleon.

Let the results achieved in Australian history by what it would be possible to describe as a century of drowsy and uneventful peace, be compared with the results, say, of the Hundred Years' War, which filled the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with its tumult, or of that second Hundred Years' War, which wasted the civilised world through the whole course of the eighteenth century; and then let it be soberly asked whether the story of that Australian century, if less resounding, is not almost as well worth telling.

The present volume does not pretend to give a de-

tailed and consecutive history of Australia. The events are often so trifling in scale that no art in the telling could prevent their record being tedious. What is here offered is the story in outline of "the making of Australia": a brief account of the forces which have shaped its history, and, in larger detail, a recital of such events in that history as have permanent human interest.

March 1913.

BOOK I

SEA STORIES

CHAPTER I

SOME GEOGRAPHICAL GHOSTS

It is a curious fact that Australia makes its appearance on ancient maps long before any much-wandering seaman had sighted its shores, or any lonely ship had broken into the waters of the Pacific. How did the maps, in this way, get before the ships? By what strange gift of foresight did what may be called the geographers of the arm-chair come to anticipate the discoveries of the most famous seamen in history? What, in a word, can explain the odd circumstances that Australia was imagined before it was discovered?

The explanation is found in the existence of a certain theory, older than Strabo or Ptolemy, almost as old as human knowledge itself, as to the distribution of sea and land—a theory which had to postulate for its completeness the existence of some great land south of the Equator. Expressing ancient speculations in modern terms, it was believed that a zone of waters stretched—like a liquid girdle—along the line of the Equator; and the great mass of land to the north was balanced by land equally vast to the south. An unknown continent *ought* to be there; it must *be* there; and finally, the map-makers, following the philosophers, and having the courage of their theories, actually *put* it there.

This explains why, a hundred years before Torres crept, unknowing, through the straits that now bear his name, there were maps which showed a vast continent, called now by one name and now by another, stretching almost from the Equator to the Pole. There are maps, indeed, as old as the tenth century which depict that mysterious, and as yet unseen, continent.

This belief, again, explains the existence of a line of literary allusions to a great southern land running back to Aristotle. The science of the centuries before Christ guessed the existence of this continent; poets sang about it; and no doubt the old "salts" of each period lied about it. Major, in his *Early Voyages to Terra Australia*, a text-book on this subject, is able to exhume a perfectly suitable motto, geographically accurate, from a minor Latin poet of the time of Tiberius:

> "Pars ejus ad arctos
> Eminet, Austrinis pars est habitabilis oris,
> Sub pedibusque jacet nostris."

The Australia of the early map-makers was, of course, a ghostly continent, with very elastic boundaries. It expanded, contracted, crept upward to the Equator, shrank down to the South Pole, according to the judgment, or want of judgment, of the particular artist engaged at the moment in depicting it. In Frobisher's map of 1578 it is a vast continent stretching through unknown degrees of longitude, and climbing up northwards until it almost touches the southern extremities of both America and Africa. In other charts it is a wedge-shaped mass of land, parted by a tiny thread of water from Java, and running down

south till the base of the vast wedge is lost in the ice and snows of the South Pole. On some maps, again, it is broken up into a sort of witches' dance of islands.

On those early maps, indeed, islands and continents came like spirits, and so departed. The "Australia" they depict — under many names — Terra Australia, Jave la Grande, &c.—resembles nothing so much as the cloud of Polonius. It is shaped like a camel, backed like a weasel, or made very like a whale, at pleasure. When the seamen of the sixteenth century actually broke into the waters of the Pacific—after Magellan, for example, on the voyage which ended his life and made his fame immortal, had discovered the straits which bear his name, and one ship after another crept across this new-discovered sea—Australia *disappeared* from the maps of the period. It was found that the deep rolled where solid land was supposed to exist. On Schoner's map of 1543, and on the famous Sebastian chart of 1544, it does not exist. Knowledge, or rather half knowledge, was fatal to guesses. The seamen, it appeared, had put the chart-makers, with their imaginary and elastic continent, to rout.

But the arm-chair geographers of the earlier centuries were partly right. There *was* a great island-continent to the south of the Equator. A land lying in lonely waters, a land of many names, of strange and unguessed boundaries; but still a great land, a rich land; a land which is to-day the cradle of an infant nation, and to-morrow may be the seat of one of the great Powers of the world.

It can easily be imagined that round the cradle of this imaginary, yet real, Australia there was an intermittent

dance of ghosts—ghosts scientific, philosophical, political, and even theological. A long catalogue of mythical "discoveries" might be given. The earliest discovery of Australia is ascribed, on the authority of Marco Polo, to the Chinese! That Venetian Munchausen solemnly puts on his map two vast islands to the south-east of Java, and gives a picturesque account of the highly civilised inhabitants of this Chinese version of Australia. On a map by Juan Vespuccias, 1522, appears a huge continent, with the title "Cation"—that is, China. That Australia, four centuries ago, was in this way labelled "China" by wicked geographers can be regarded by present-day Australians as nothing less than a prophetic insult. It *is* possible, of course, that some lonely, wind-blown junk, with a huge painted eye on each bow, and a crew of pig-tailed and bewildered seamen on its deck, may have drifted—or been blown—into Australian waters; but it needs better authority than a "yarn" by Marco Polo to make the tale credible.

Another claim to "the earliest discovery" of Australia is made by a Frenchman, Binot de Gonneville, who sailed from Honfleur in 1503 on a voyage to the South Seas. He returned after many months with a strange story. After doubling the Cape of Good Hope, he was caught in a furious and long-continued gale, which blew him upon the shore of a hitherto unknown land, and he brought back with him, in proof of his tale, "the son of the king of the country"; and the country was Australia! De Gonneville's log was deposited with the French Admiralty. According to the story, the original "King Billy," thus transported from some Australian

tribe to the latitude of Paris, married, and his grandson, a priest, in 1663, addressed a petition to Pope Alexander VII. explaining that he was consumed with a pious longing to "preach the Gospel in the country of his ancestors," and to fulfil the promise the first French navigator had made that he should visit that country again. De Gonneville was a real person, and his voyage is historic: but his own story, when studied in the light of modern knowledge, proves that the land on whose shores he was blown was not Australia, but Madagascar. Alfred Russel Wallace, indeed, holds the view that the Australian aboriginal is really a degraded outlier of the great Caucasian type, and so represents a stage, not in an upward, but in a downward, movement. He is not a simian on his way to become a man, but a man of a high type on his way to the level of a simian. On this theory the Australian blackfellow of 1503 may have been of a higher type than the corresponding blackfellow of to-day. But the whole story of de Gonneville's "discovery of Australia" is certainly a myth; and the notion of King Billy in a French surplice is nothing short of amusing.

If we dismiss myths of this character, and come to sober history, two nations—Spain and Portugal—have a more or less valid claim to the glory of discovering Australia. Later a third nation of a quite different type, the Dutch, makes its appearance in Australian waters, and assists in the process.

The spell which drew the ships of both Portugal and Spain into southern waters is quite intelligible. It was not any desire to enlarge the bounds of human knowledge, but only to reach the spice islands of the Malay

Archipelago, and make a "corner" in what was the most remunerative "line" the commerce of that time knew—the great spice trade. The Portuguese took the eastward route, crept along Africa, and finally rounded the Cape. The Spaniards, taught by the genius of Columbus, believed that the spice-bearing islands of the East might be reached by sailing west. The Portuguese rounded the Cape in 1497; the discovery of the straits which bear his name by Magellan opened the Pacific to the Spaniards in 1521.

A glance at the map shows that either route brought the ships of that period within easy distance of the shores of the great, and as yet unvisited, continent to the south. A strong gale might blow them on to it; a blunder in navigation might bring them up against it. Both nations, it must be remembered, were traders by business and explorers or discoverers only by accident. They were in search, not of strange continents, but of fat profits. But discovery, of the accidental sort, was inevitable.

The Portuguese were more practical—not to say sordid—in temper than even the Spaniards. "They seem," wrote an angry poet of the day—Pierre Crignon, 1529—"to have drunk of the dust of the heart of King Alexander, for that they appear to think that God made the sea and the land only for them, and that if they could have locked up the sea from Finisterre to Ireland, it would have been done long ago." The Spaniards, on their part, mingled religion with trade, and even added a certain strain of romance to both elements. They wanted to get rich spice-cargoes; but they also wanted to add new provinces to Spain, and

to convert new nations to Christianity, or to what they thought was Christianity.

The romantic strain in some, at least, of the early Spanish explorers is illustrated by the well-known story of Balboa, when in 1513 he reached the actual shores of the Pacific. He took formal possession of that vast sea "for Castile and for Leon" by wading knee-deep into its waters, uplifted sword in one hand, the standard of Castile in the other. That was at least picturesque!

The strain of religious passion in the early Spanish discoverers finds expression, again, in the story of how Fernandez de Quiros, in 1606, tried to establish a colony on religious lines upon the New Hebrides. He named one island Del Espiritu Santo, undertook to found a New Jerusalem there, and scribbled Scripture names over the whole landscape.

Another proof of the religious element in early Spanish exploration is found in the memorial addressed to Philip III of Spain by Juan Luis Arias, and republished by the Hakluyt Society. The memorial burns with religious—or, rather, irreligious—fire. The writer warns Philip that "the English and Dutch heretics, whom the devil unites for this purpose by every means in his power, most diligently continue the exploration, discovery, and colonisation of the principal ports of this large part of the world in the Pacific Ocean, and sow in it the most pernicious poisons of their apostasy." "These basilisks," he says, "have already captured whole provinces in America, and are rapidly sowing the infernal poison of their heresy in those realms." "If they are allowed to get possession of

new lands in the south the consequences," Dr. Juan Luis Arias argues, almost with tears, "must be deplorable." He proves from Scripture and philosophy alike that "there must be as great a surface of uncovered land in the southern hemisphere as in the northern." "The prophet Obadiah," he informs His Majesty, "prophesied to the letter the conquest and possession of the southern hemisphere through the medium of the preaching of the Gospel by the Spanish nation, which has preserved in its integrity the faith of the Redeemer and of His Catholic Church." History, it may be interjected, has proved "the prophet Obadiah" —in his Spanish form, at least—to be a very unreliable seer.

This fervent divine recites at length all the discoveries made by Spanish ships, claiming that Torres, in particular, when passing through the straits which now bear his name, "had constantly on the right hand the coast of another very great land"; and he urges that it is the most urgent duty of the King to plant the Christian faith on these new shores. "It touches nothing less than your salvation and the final loss of your crown," he tells Philip, "if you do not send, as speedily as possible, to the southern hemisphere a sufficient number of preachers of the Gospel." He warns the King of "the most terrible consequences" which must befall him if he "withdraws from the contract he has made with the Redeemer through the medium of his vicar and the head of his Church," &c.

If Dr. Juan Luis Arias could see these lands to-day, he would find that Philip III *did* withdraw from his "contract" with the Almighty, and those "basilisks,"

the Protestants, with their "pestilent heresy," abound on the shores of the great land Torres saw—or perhaps did *not* see—in 1606.

The peril of Spain, as an exploring and colonising nation, came in, as history shows, at exactly this point of ill-instructed religious zeal. There crept into its treatment of the native races under its care a cruelty which brought with it the penalty of a just and eternal barrenness. Spain planted amongst her American colonies the Inquisition: and there is no more striking example of those great and Divine retributions—which we call the "revenges of history"—than the fate which befell the colonial empire of Spain. It has vanished like a dream. Of the new lands which Spain discovered and colonised not enough is left to-day beneath the Spanish flag to give a grave to the dust of Columbus.

The Dutch came later into the business of exploration than either the Portuguese or the Spaniards, and they brought to the task the temper of the trader alone. Dutch seamen were hardy and daring; but they went round the world in search, not of new continents, but of fat cargoes. Exploration was an incidental, not to say accidental, affair with them. Dutch ships bumped up, by bad navigation or by stress of weather, against the Australian coast when sailing to and from Java; but no one can imagine a Dutchman repeating Balboa's theatrical performance, and wading knee-deep into a strange sea, sword in one hand, flag in the other, to take possession of it for his fatherland. The typical Dutch explorer is Dirk Hartog, nailing an economical tin plate on a post upon the empty Australian shore, and then sailing away. The official Dutch summary

of Australia, after many years of nibbling at its shore, is: "We found everywhere shallow water and barren coasts, islands altogether thinly peopled by divers cruel, poor, and brutal nations, *and of very little use to the* [Dutch East India] *company.*"

CHAPTER II

A QUESTION WITH MANY ANSWERS

If the question be asked who really "discovered" Australia, it is not easy to supply an answer. Australia is a sufficiently big target: and when the attraction of the spice islands drew the ships of every maritime nation of the world into southern waters, an area so vast as that of Australia, it might be imagined, would have been at once discovered, mapped, and colonised. But if all the real or imaginary "discoveries" of Australia, from de Gonneville in 1503 to Dampier in 1688, are put down in order, they make a list of dates amazing in length, and of events very perplexing by their uncertainty. The blunders of the early explorers were, as to scale, astonishing, while in character they are often very entertaining.

De Gonneville himself, as we have seen, mistook Madagascar for Australia. It is claimed that Magellan in 1520 discovered Australia, and much ink has been shed by geographers since in the attempt to identify the lands he really visited. Many experts contend that the coast he touched was that of South America. The weight of opinion to-day is in favour of New Guinea. It certainly was not Australia. Mendana in 1567 believed he had come at last upon the true coast line of the missing continent. What he really dis-

covered was the Solomon Islands, and that name was given to the group because the Spanish seamen of that age, influenced by the story of Cortes, were prepared to discover another Mexico on every islet in the Pacific, and they persuaded themselves that Solomon obtained the gold for his Temple from this cluster of foam-girdled islands set in unknown seas!

Torres in 1606 groped his way up the straits which now bear his name, but he did not in the least understand his own performance. It seems certain that he saw Australia, without recognising it. He reports that "in the eleventh degree of south latitude were very large islands," and there "appeared more to the southward." What he saw was the hills of Cape York.

At that very moment, as it happened, a small Dutch ship, the *Duyfken*—the *Little Dove*—a yacht of 30 tons, was feeling her way along the western curve of Cape York itself, supposing it to be New Guinea. The tiny craft reached the point now called Cape Keerweer, or Turn Again. Both the Dutchman and the Spaniard were really doing something memorable, and neither knew it. Torres missed Australia, under the belief that there was nothing but water to the westward of him. The *Duyfken* missed discovering the straits from the conviction that there was nothing but land to the eastward.

It adds to the humour of the story to know it was left to a Scotchman more than 150 years afterwards to discover what Torres had really done, and to give his name to the straits which he had unconsciously explored. Torres left the log of his voyage at Manila. When in 1762 that city fell into the hands of the

British the document was discovered by Dalrymple, the hydrographer to the East India Company. He saw, from the single sentence we have quoted about "very large islands to the southward," that Torres had actually passed through the straits, and he made the suggestion that they should bear his name. As a matter of fact the existence of the straits was not definitely known and accepted until Cook passed through them in 1770.

The uncertain nature of all these early discoveries is illustrated by the fact that Dampier himself, on his *second* voyage, in 1699, when struggling with the neap tides on the broken coast near Shark's Bay, seems to have lost for a moment his faith in the very existence of Australia. "We saw," he says, "a range of islands about 20 leagues in length. We could see nine or ten leagues among them towards the island or continent of New Holland, *if there be any such thing hereabouts!*" And yet ten years before he had spent three months on Australian soil! But the seamen of that age were amusingly ready to mistake islands for continents and continents for islands.

Many causes combine to create that atmosphere of uncertainty which envelops the whole story of these early explorations. The seamen of the period were hardy and daring in a very high degree. The mere fact that the *Duyfken*, a yacht of 30 tons, could, at so early a date as 1606, grope her way through uncharted waters, along an unknown coast, for so many leagues, is at least a proof of great courage on the part of her crew. But the scientific knowledge of the seamen of that day was scanty. Sanitary methods were as yet

undiscovered; there was little discipline in the forecastle and less science on the quarter-deck. Nothing is more striking in the story of those early voyages than the number of mutinies that took place. When the men were not dying of scurvy they were plotting against their officers. It was a mutiny which turned Torres back at the supreme moment of his passage through the straits.

There was, again, very little of the true spirit of exploration amongst the seamen of the age that witnessed so many discoveries. The passion for knowledge, and the faculty for scientific observation and exact record, came in with Cook and Flinders. *They* were explorers by force of natural genius. The thirst for knowledge in them was a passion. Cook, it will be remembered, had achieved fame; he had returned only a few days from his first great voyage, and had received an appointment to a comfortable and remunerative post in Greenwich Hospital, when the news came of an expedition about to be sent to the North Pacific. He instantly volunteered to take command of it—the last of all his voyages. Flinders said of himself that "if he was dead and being buried, and somebody pronounced over his coffin the word 'exploration,' it would bring him to life again."

In some rare cases the seamen of the sixteenth century may have had that spirit. Some of them at least had a touch of more than "the dust of Alexander"; they had the spirit of Alexander. They seemed to themselves to be sailing over enchanted seas. They were consciously enlarging the boundaries of the world, as well as adding new and strange

kingdoms to their native land. There was a gleam of this high spirit in Magellan. He was a Portuguese. The king refused to raise his pay 13*s.* per annum, and Magellan, in a burst of angry pride, threw off his allegiance and betook himself to Spain, and that denied 13*s.* cost Portugal the honour of the discovery of the famous straits.

But, it must be repeated, the spirit of the early explorers was in the main sordid. They were in pursuit of trade, not of knowledge. This explains the jealousy with which they concealed their discoveries. Portugal forbade, on pain of death, the sale of any chart which showed the course to Calicut, and Spain and Holland were equally anxious to keep unguessed and unsuspected any discoveries which would be likely to assist their trade rivals. This explains, again, the existence of many maps which were deliberately "cooked" for the purpose of misleading such rivals.

Pope Alexander VI, it will be remembered, undertook, in 1493, to settle the disputes as to the ownership of newly discovered lands. He decided that all lands discovered east of a meridian 100 leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands—His Holiness, in spite of his infallibility, believed these were on the *same* meridian!—should, for the space of 180 degrees of longitude, belong to Portugal; those to the westward of the same meridian, and over an equal area, should belong to Spain.

But the two powers concerned wrangled furiously over the exact position of the line of demarcation, and "cooked" their maps with great diligence so as

to bring coveted islands to one side or other of the sacred line. A commission was appointed in 1524 to settle where the line ran, but after spending months in the business the members of it broke into an exasperated quarrel with each other, and parted without reaching any decision.

It is interesting to remember that the Pope's line extended to Australia, and if that sacred award still held good this country would be divided, though in equal proportions, betwixt the Spaniards and the Portuguese. But the infallibility of the Pope clearly does not extend to matters geographical and political.

It is difficult, of course, from this jumble of myths and blunders, of doubtful "discoveries," "cooked" maps, and unscientific legs, either to select the definite moment when Australia was first seen by European eyes, or to name the seaman to whom the honour of discovering Australia actually belongs. Major, who has some claim to speak as an authority on the subject, regards it, on the evidence of a cluster of maps of the period, as "highly probable" that Australia was discovered by the Portuguese between the years 1511 and 1529, and "almost a demonstrable certainty" that it was discovered before the year 1542. In a work published by Cornelius Wytfliet in 1597, is a passage which describes "Australis Terra" as "the most southern of all lands and separated from New Guinea by a narrow strait. It begins at two or three degrees from the Equator, and is maintained by some to be of so great an extent that if it were thoroughly explored it would be regarded as a fifth part of the world."

Now Wytfliet was a Dutchman, and he is describing Dutch discoverers and their work; yet the very earliest of all Dutch expeditions to southern waters had only just started when Wytfliet's book and maps were published. The passage about "Australis Terra" is only an example of the cool fashion in which Dutch writers and mapmakers appropriated the discoveries of other nations. But when it has been admitted that the Dutch knew nothing which entitled them to say anything about "Australis Terra," the puzzle remains: *whence* came, at so early a date as 1597, a description of Australia so nearly accurate?

Major gives to the little Dutch yacht, the *Duyfken*, the pride of place in the work of Australian discovery. "Without being conscious of it," he says, "the commander of the *Duyfken*, in 1606, groping along the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, made the first authenticated discovery of part of the great south land." The name of the commander of the yacht, who thus did a big thing without knowing it, was Willem Tansz.

The Dutch ship *Eendraght*—the *Concord*—commanded by Dirk Hartog, touched on the Australian coast in 1616, at the point known as Dirk Hartog's Roads, at the entrance to the sound which still bears the name Shark's Bay—given to it by Dampier. Dirk Hartog set up a post on the island which bears his name, and fastened to it a tin plate with the following inscription:

"On the 25th of October, 1616, arrived here the ship *Eendraght*, of Amsterdam; the first merchant, Giles Mibais

Van Luyck; Captain Dirck Hartog, of Amsterdam; the 27th ditto set sail for Bantam; under-merchant, Jan Stoyn; upper steersman, Pieter Dockes, from Bil. Ao. 1616."

That tin plate is the first authentic bit of Australian literature, and it has a curious history. Eighty years after, in 1697, it was found by another Dutchman, Vlaming, captain of the *Geelvinck*. He carried it off, and replaced it by one with an inscription describing his own visit. More than 100 years afterwards, in 1804, the French ship *Naturaliste*, under Captain Hamelin, visited Shark's Bay, and discovered the plate, half covered with sand, lying near an old post on which it had been originally nailed. According to one story, the Frenchman carried off the plate, and it is hidden in some museum in Paris; according to another version, he copied the inscription, replaced the plate, and set beside it another recording his own visit.

Collingridge, in his *Discovery of Australia*, discusses Dirk Hartog's plate at great length, and with many doubts as to whether the plate was really carried off either by Vlaming to the museum at Amsterdam, or by Hamelin to the Institute at Paris. He doubts, indeed, whether the plate ever really existed. Collingridge's book was printed in 1895, and since then, in 1902, the actual plate Dirk Hartog put up three centuries ago has been discovered in the State Museum at Amsterdam, and has been photographed. It is thus the earliest authentic literary document in Australian history.

It cannot be said that the Dutch added greatly to the sum of human knowledge about Australia. One casual Dutch ship or another, at wide intervals

of time, ran, without intending it, on the Australian coast, or crept along some little patch of the shore-line, and left its record in a Dutch name, clapped on to some headland or bay. We get a sprinkling of such names from Cape Leeuwin to Cape Keerweer; but the idea that this vast expanse of coast was sounded and mapped, and its chief features ascertained by the Dutch, is utterly wrong. Apart from Tasman, the main Dutch contributions to the knowledge of mankind about Australia—from the performances of the *Little Dove* in 1606 to the cruise of the unfortunate *Zeeuryk* in 1727—consist of a good many Dutch names on the map—names sometimes pilfered from the Portuguese—a tin plate, two marooned Dutch seamen, and a surprising number of Dutch wrecks on the Australian coast-line.

CHAPTER III

EARLY SEA-DISASTERS

The Dutch were very unfortunate in their early maritime dealings with Australia. They were unlucky in the circumstance that they touched only on the most desolate and unpromising stretch of the Australian coast-line. If the bluff bows of their ships, indeed, had been turned to the east coast instead of to the west and north, the history of Australia might have been completely changed. Some Dutch ship might have blundered into Port Jackson, or into Hobson's Bay, and in that case flourishing Dutch colonies might have been planted, and "New Holland" would have been New Holland still. But the only parts of Australia the Dutchmen knew were the wild breakers and the frowning cliffs of the Great Australian Bight; or the tropical scrubs and barren coast-line of the Northern Territory and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Dutch seamen, it may be added, contributed more wrecks to the business of Australian discovery than the seamen of any other nation; and, as a result, they flung much wealth upon its shores, and took none away from it. One Dutch ship, it is true, *did* return, bringing silver, pottery, &c., from Australia; but it all came from a previous Dutch wreck. Much Dutch treasure, indeed, still lies somewhere under the wash of the Pacific breakers.

Some of these wrecks were attended with tragical incidents. A heavy-sterned barque, *De Vergulde Draeck*—the *Gilt Dragon*—sailed from the Texel in 1655 with much treasure and many men on board. It carried in silver no less than 78,600 guilders. In April, 1656, this ill-fated ship came to utter wreck on the Australian coast somewhere in the neighbourhood of Perth, and of the crew and passengers 118 were drowned. A solitary boat brought the news to Batavia, and reported sixty-eight survivors to be still on the wreck. Two small ships were sent off at once, but failed to discover them.

The fate of those missing sixty-eight seems to have deeply touched even the slow-beating Dutch imagination; for in 1658—nearly three years after the wreck took place—two galliots were despatched to search the Australian coast for them. They did their business thoroughly, landing parties on the coast, tacking and filling off the place where the wrecked ship was supposed to lie, and "firing signal guns night and day." There is something pathetic in the spectacle of these two Dutch galliots hanging off the shore of this dim and unknown continent, and with flash and boom of signal guns calling to the comrades lost three years before, and calling in vain. The whole crew of the unfortunate *Gilt Dragon* had perished; and those 78,000 guilders are still lying somewhere under the spray-whipped Australian beach.

Another Dutch ship, the *Ridderschap Van Hollandt*—*Knights of Holland*—was lost on the same line of coast in 1696. Two years afterwards—for the Dutch are a leisurely race—a Dutch man-o'-war, the *Geelvinck*

—the *Yellow-hammer*—was directed to explore the western coast of Australia in search of traces of survivors of the wreck. It was the commander of this ship, Wilhelm de Vlaming, who discovered Swan River, and picked up Dirk Hartog's tin plate at Shark's Bay.

The most dramatic story of wreck on the Australian coast is of an earlier date; it is that of the unfortunate *Batavia*, commanded by Captain Francis Pelsart. It sailed from the Texel in 1628, and on the night of June 4, 1629, struck on one of the islands of Hautman's Abrolhos, a cluster of rocky islets and jagged, spear-pointed reefs some fifty miles to the west of Champion Bay. "Abrolhos" is a Portuguese word, meaning "keep your eyes open"; and plainly has behind it some tragical marine experiences.

Pelsart, the captain, was sick in his bunk when the ship struck. He ran on deck; it was a calm night, the moon riding high in the heavens, a soft wind blowing. But a tossing ribbon of white froth stretching through the haze as far as the eye could reach, marked the reef. So deceptive was the appearance, however, that the unfortunate master, who was by the wheel when the ship struck, thought the ghostly, uncertain line of white was occasioned by the broken rays of the moon.

Pelsart asked his master, "In what part of the world they were," and got for an answer, "God only knows *that*." The ship was on an unknown reef. They commenced to jettison their guns in the hope that when the ship was lightened she might float. Meanwhile the skies had darkened, a sudden gale with heavy rain

came up, and when the grey dawn broke there were reefs on every side, a heavy sea was running, and the land was eight leagues distant. The mainmast was cut away, but in the confusion, and want of discipline, there was no getting the mast disentangled from the rigging. "In order," the story runs, to "pacify the women, children, and sick people, and such as were out of their wits with fear, whose cries served only to disturb them," it was resolved to land these on a low and rocky islet some three leagues distant.

But order was impossible; the crew had broken into the stores and got drunk. Some 180 persons were, in the end, landed on one island or another, with a scanty supply of provisions, but with little water. Pelsart started in a small boat for the islet on which the larger number had been landed, discovered that there was no water on it, and found, when he reached his ship again, that it was impossible to get on board owing to the gale that was blowing. The carpenter leaped from the wrecked ship and swam to the boat with the news that the remainder of the crew on board, a lieutenant and seventy men, were in sore straits. The brave fellow swam back again to the ship with instructions for the unhappy wretches on board to make rafts and floats and try to reach the boats. But the sea was growing yet more furious, and the boats returned to the island.

Amongst the unfortunate Dutch, in a word, there was no discipline, abundant grumbling, and all the elements of mutiny. Part of the survivors had reached a smaller island close at hand; but those on the larger island refused to allow the captain to visit the other company lest he should forsake them. Pelsart, it is

clear, had lost all control over the wrecked crew. He finally set off in a boat to search the coast for water, and spent a week in the business, drifting along the rocky coast on which a furious sea was breaking, until the boat's crew was on the point of perishing with thirst.

They succeeded at last in landing, collected a scanty supply of water, then turned the stem of their boat northward, under the tropical skies, to Java. On the thirtieth day after leaving the wreck they were picked up by a ship and carried to Batavia. Pelsart was promptly despatched back in a yacht to take off the survivors of the wrecked ship, and recover the treasure it carried.

Meanwhile the ill-fated *Batavia*, and the islands on which, in separate parties, the survivors were encamped, had become the scene of a drama almost without parallel in the annals of shipwreck. The evil genius of the tragedy was an apothecary of Haarlem, named Cornelius, who had exchanged the business of vending drugs for that of supercargo; and who in character, if not in appearance, resembled nothing so much as the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*—

> "If a man did need a poison now,
> Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him."

He might have been addressed in Romeo's words—

> "The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law.
> The world affords no law to make thee rich.
> Then be not poor, but break it."

This Dutch apothecary had his dreams—strange sea dreams to awaken in the brain of a man of drugs. He

had plotted with the pilot and some others to seize the ship, and sail off on a cruise under the black flag as pirates. The wreck seemed fatal to his plans, and for ten days the unhappy seventy on board the ship could discover no means of reaching the land.

The ex-apothecary, however, at last clambered on a drifting spar, remained perched on it, flung to and fro with the tide for two days, and finally reached the larger island on which the main body of the survivors was camped. Here his dark and masterful genius found a fit field. He gathered a circle of kindred spirits about him, murdered some thirty or forty who refused to join him, and set up, with forty-five followers, a kingdom of his own. He broke open the cases of rich stuffs that had drifted ashore, clothed his followers in scarlet cloth, embroidered with gold and silver, appropriated the unfortunate daughter of a minister as a wife, and distributed the other women amongst the party. He was elected "captain-general" by a document which all his comrades signed, and instantly proclaimed war on the neighbouring island. But he was a conspirator, not a soldier. His repeated attacks were defeated, and in one he himself was captured.

While this mad tragedy was in progress Pelsart arrived in a schooner, the *Sardam*, on his errand of rescue. By a happy chance he landed first on the island held by the loyal section of the survivors, learnt what had happened, and pulled hurriedly back to his schooner to prepare for the attack of the mutineers. They presently came up in two boats, a theatrical-looking crew, dressed in scarlet, with embroidery of gold and silver. When Pelsart had them fairly under

the guns of his schooner he bade them cast their arms into the sea, or he would sink them. They were seized, placed in irons, and the first man examined confessed that he had killed, or assisted in killing, no less than twenty-seven persons!

The ship, meanwhile, had broken up. The neighbouring beaches were searched for lost treasure, and many chests of silver were discovered. Pelsart finally set sail for Batavia, having first hung all his prisoners, except two men who were marooned. Two marooned Dutch mutineers may thus be described as the first permanent, if involuntary, settlers in Australia.

It is a curious fact that more than 200 years afterwards—in 1840—a British survey-boat, under Captain Crawford Pascoe—later well known in Melbourne—when examining the rocky islets of the Abrolhos, came upon huge ship timbers, with iron bolts corroded by sea-salt to the diameter of nails, &c. Some copper coins were picked up with the date 1620. These were plainly part of the wreck of the *Batavia*, and on their evidence Pascoe named the anchorage Batavia Roads, and the little islets Pelsart's Group.

On another islet to the west of the same group Pascoe found the débris of a later wreck, that of the *Zeewyk*, lost in 1727. Some of the articles found were very curious; small glass bottles about the size and form of Dutch cheeses, "very orderly arranged in rows on the ground"; many small clay pipes which had not known the flavour of tobacco for 120 years, but which Pascoe's tars cheerfully smoked, unmindful of the long dead lips which had last touched them. Amongst the relics was a brass gun—a breech-loader, curiously enough—with

a movable chamber, and the red paint still on the muzzle.

The story of the *Zeewyk* is almost as tragical as that of the *Batavia*. It sailed from Amsterdam with a full crew and much treasure, and ran ashore on the Australian coast almost within sight of the spot where the *Batavia* was wrecked. Most of the crew were drowned; the survivors built from the wreck of their ship a cutter big enough to carry their whole number, eighty-two persons, with ten chests of treasure, to Batavia. It was no mean feat to construct such a craft, and reach safety with it. A boat with eleven seamen had been despatched in advance, with the ship's papers and a prayer for assistance, but this unhappy party was never heard of again.

In the letter telling the story of the wreck, sent by the captain from Batavia to the directors of the India Company, in Amsterdam, was included "a little card, unsigned, apparently in the handwriting of the skipper." It ran:

"I pray of you most urgently to send me help and assistance against these robbers of the money and goods from the wreck *Zeewyk*, who have divided the money and goods among themselves. I am stark naked; they have taken everything from me. O my God! They have behaved like wild beasts to me, and everyone is master. Worse than beasts do they live; it is impossible that on board a pirate ship things can be worse than here, because everyone thinks that he is rich, from the highest to the lowest of my subordinates. They say among themselves, 'Let us drink a glass to your health, ye old ducats!'"

The whole of the treasure, as a matter of fact, was recovered; and in the long run the captain himself, Jan Staines, was held guilty of losing his ship by neglect of orders, and of "cooking" his log, and was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

CHAPTER IV

A DANCE OF DATES

It is plain, from the history here sketched, that the so-called "discovery" of Australia—a process spread through centuries—was a chain of planless accidents. The Spaniards were half-dreamers, half-fanatics; the Dutch were traders, with brains as prosaic as their heavy-sterned ships. The day of the scientific explorer, and of the serious colonist—the era of Cook and of Flinders—had not yet come.

It is true that once, at least, the Spaniards *did* meditate planting a colony on Australian soil: and the whole story is an illustration of Spanish ideas and methods. In 1595 four Spanish vessels, under the command of Mendana, with de Quiros as chief pilot, sailed for San Cristoval, one of the Solomons, his former discovery, proposing to plant a settlement there, and then to reach Australia and plant a colony on it. The leaders of the little expedition took their wives with them, on that account. They blundered on Santa Cruz, in the New Hebrides group. Sickness and mutiny broke out amongst the would-be settlers. Mendana died, and the wrecks of the expedition returned in 1596 to Spain.

De Quiros took up the threads of the broken plan ten years later, and in April, 1606, discovered another

island in the New Hebrides group, which he named La Australia del Espiritu Santo. The little bay in which he anchored he named the Port of the True Cross; the town was to be called the New Jerusalem; the river that runs into the bay was named the Jordan. Here was a mixture of ancient Scripture and mediæval exploration! The settlement failed. The New Jerusalem has certainly not arisen on the soil of Santa Cruz; but it is interesting to reflect that if Mendana had lived, and had succeeded, and Spain had developed a true genius for colonisation, a Spanish-Australian empire might have arisen in these waters. But history shows that Spain never mastered the art of colonisation. Her territories in South America were conquests, not colonies; the sword counted for much in them, the spade for little.

Cardinal Moran, in his *History of the Catholic Church in Australia*, tried to prove that—not Torres, but—de Quiros anticipated Cook by a century and a half in coasting up the eastern shore of that continent. He mistook, we are asked to believe, the New Hebrides for Australia, and, without knowing it, wrote his cipher of Scripture names on Australian soil. The Port Curtis of to-day is his "port of Vera Cruz"; the rivers north and south of Port Curtis—the Boyne and the Burnett—are the Jordan and the Salvador of de Quiros. Port Curtis, of course, is in 24° south; De Quiros gives the position of the bay in which he dropped anchor as 15° 20′ south, so that Cardinal Moran's theory makes de Quiros very sadly out in his reckoning. To mistake an island for a continent, it may be added, gives him a very high place in the procession of blundering explorers.

The first serious proposal to colonise Australia was British in its origin, and its author, Sir William Courteen, was a London merchant, with that vision for great opportunities and that faculty for daring enterprise which explain the British Empire of to-day. He owned many ships, and traded in all seas; he had planted a colony in the Barbadoes, where he built a fort, and waged war like an independent monarch. Collingridge publishes the petition Courteen addressed to James I. in 1624. It recites:

"That all the lands in ye South parts of the world called Terra Australia, incognita, . . . together with all ye adjacente Islands, etc., are yet undiscovered, or being discovered, are not yet traded unto by any of your Majestie's subjects. And your petitioner being very willing, att his owne charges, which wil be very greate, to endeavour ye discovery thereof, and settle collonies and a plantation there which he hopeth will tend to ye glory of God, ye reducing of Infidells to Christianity, ye honour of your Majestie, ye enlargement of your Majestie's Territories and Dominions, ye increase of your Majestie's customes and revenue, and ye Navigation and imployment of your Majestie's subjects."

Courteen petitions James to grant to him "all ye said lands, islands, and territories, with power to discover ye same, to erect colonies in ye plantation there, with courts of justice," &c., also "power to administer justice and to execute marshall law by land and sea." Courteen did not receive a grant of "ye said lands, islands, and territories." If he had he would have been the biggest landed proprietor known to history. What deed of grant would have been spacious enough to hold

a continent! Courteen's ideas of colonisation, however, were incomparably more practical than those of Mendana, and if he could have carried them into effect, Australian history would have begun nearly two centuries earlier, and a statue to Courteen might stand where that of Cook now looks out over the Pacific.

Dampier is universally credited with being the first Englishman who put his foot on the soil of Australia, though this, like almost every other supposed "fact" in the early history of the continent, is surrounded by a haze of doubt. In 1622—sixty-five years before Dampier saw Australia—the crew of an English vessel wrecked on the Australian coast found its way to Batavia, and it is almost certain that some members of the party had landed on the Australian coast. But Dampier must always be a notable figure in the tale of the discovery of Australia. He was himself a sort of human puzzle, compounded of the strangest opposites; and his career is as bewildering in its variety as were the elements of his character.

He was, in turn, a sailor before the mast, a buccaneer, a captain in the navy, a man of science, an explorer, an author. The incidents of his story are strangely picturesque. He was a seaman on the British flagship in the stubborn fights of May 28 and June 4, 1673; manager of a plantation in Jamaica; the comrade of logwood cutters in Campeachy, drinking rum-punch with them, and sharing their rough life; a leading spirit in a buccaneering fleet that raided the whole coast of South America, and sacked Santa Marta. His first visit to Australia was merely an incident in a piratical cruise. He was once marooned by his fellow-buccaneers.

He was finally court-martialled by the British Admiralty, found guilty of cruelty to his officers, and pronounced incapable of further service under the flag.

And yet, with such a record, Coleridge describes him as "a man of exquisite refinement of mind"! No doubt, his mind on one side was a bundle of more or less refined sensibilities, but on the other it was fiercely cruel. He was capable, according to his biographer, of describing a bunch of flowers, or a rare fish, in the intervals betwixt looting a wine-shop and sacking a village. His face, in a sense, is the reflex of his strange character. The long, dark visage is certainly intellectual; the deep lines beneath the eyes tell of dissipation; the mouth, for all its meditative curve, has a suggestion of cruelty in it, and the dark, wearied eyes have a coldness behind which it is easy to conceive a fire of lust and passion might readily be kindled. Dampier was, no doubt, a fine seaman, but though he had a charm which, somehow, won him friends amongst politicians and scholars, he had no real gift of leadership. His crew was commonly in a state of mutiny. He won no personal successes in his piratical cruises. His courage was more than suspected.

Dampier had, however, one fine intellectual quality, a passion for knowledge. Like the Ulysses of Tennyson, he longed to "follow knowledge like a sinking star beyond the utmost bounds of human thought." He explains his reason for joining in one particularly atrocious piratical adventure by saying the circumstance that "the further we went the more knowledge and experience I should get was the main thing that I regarded." Dampier certainly possessed a genius for

observation. He had the keenest pair of eyes in his head his generation knew. He was a scientific explorer before exploration as a science was born. His *Discourse on the Winds* is still, so far as it goes, a text-book. His prose, too, has a touch of the ease, the lucidity, the short-worded terseness of Defoe. It is, indeed, the charm of his literary style which makes De Quincey—himself an epicure in words—describe him as "our admirable Dampier." Dampier supplied Defoe, it may be said in passing, with the immortal hero of *Robinson Crusoe*. He marooned Alexander Selkirk on Juan Fernandez, on one voyage (in 1704), and took him off the island on another voyage, four years afterwards. Nelson was accustomed to recommend Dampier's *Voyages* to the middies on his flagship.

Dampier first visited Australia in the course of a cruise—or rather a buccaneering ramble—round the world in the *Revenge*, a ramble which stretched through eight years. When he turned the stem of his ship towards Australia his purpose was—as he puts it with great frankness—"to see what that country could afford us." He was, in other words, in search of booty. There might be another Mexico to be plundered! He landed at some point on the northern coast, near Melville Island, but it was promptly realised that a land so desolate and empty too could "afford" very little which the wild spirits on board the *Revenge* were likely to appreciate. His crew, indeed, threatened to maroon Dampier "on the sands of New Holland," as a punishment for having brought them there, or because he showed a desire to linger there too long, and on March 12, 1688, the *Revenge* sailed northward for Nicobar.

Dampier's second visit in 1699 was much more respectable in aspect. He was the captain of the *Roebuck*, a king's ship, of twelve guns, victualled for a twenty months' cruise, and his business was to survey the whole coast of Australia, recording the soundings day by day, noting tides, currents, &c. He was instructed, further, to "collect samples of drugs, spices, minerals," with a special view to "planting settlements in the best districts." He was, in other words, to do in 1699 what Cook did in 1770. A century in time—but a still wider interval in character—parts the two men. Dampier had no touch of Cook's sober genius and tireless industry: still less of his austere standard of duty. He sighted the Australian coast on August 2, 1699, made a landing in what is now known as Shark's Bay, and spent four months in cruising along a stretch of the coast measuring, he says, 900 miles, and making rambling visits ashore. On December 5 he left Australia, and shaped a course to Timor. His visit to Australia certainly did not increase the sum-total of human knowledge as to what this unknown continent hid within its vast sweep of sea-coast; but at least it was a visit of another type than the accidental performances of the Spanish, Portuguese, or Dutch navigators who had previously visited Australian waters. It was the first, the longest, the most serious, though a quite unsuccessful, attempt to gain an intelligent knowledge of Australia.

Dampier was the first Englishman to interview and study the Australian blackfellow, and it is still interesting to see the picture of the Australian aboriginal of two centuries ago as seen through Dampier's dark and vigilant eyes.

"All of them," he says, "have the most unpleasant looks and the worst features of any people that ever I saw, though I have seen great variety of savages.

"The inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world. The Hodmadods of Monomatapa, though a nasty people, yet for wealth are gentlemen to these; and, setting aside their human shape, they differ but little from brutes. They are tall, straight-bodied, and thin, with small long limbs. They have great heads, round foreheads, and great brows. Their eyelids are always half-closed, to keep the flies out of their eyes, they being so troublesome here that no fanning will keep them from coming to one's face; and without the assistance of both hands to keep them off, they will creep into one's nostrils, and mouth, too, if the lips are not shut very close. So that, from their infancy, being thus annoyed with these insects, they do never open their eyes as other people do; and, therefore, they cannot see far, unless they hold up their heads as if they were looking at somewhat over them. They have great bottle-noses, pretty full lips, and wide mouths. The two fore-teeth of their upper jaw are wanting in all of them, men and women, old and young; whether they draw them out I know not: neither have they any beards. They are long-visaged, and of a very unpleasing aspect, having no one graceful feature in their faces."

It may be serviceable, at this point, to throw into consecutive form, with dates, the various contributions to the "discovery" of Australia, scattered over two centuries, that the reader may realise how tedious and

fragmentary was the whole process; and how impossible it is to link that discovery to a single name, or date, or event:

1503.—Binot de Gonneville, a Frenchman, sailed from Honfleur in June 1503. After doubling the Cape of Good Hope, he was driven by a furious gale on to an unknown land, which he claimed to be Australia. This is "the earliest alleged discovery of Australia on record." As a matter of fact, the land de Gonneville reached was Madagascar.

1520.—It is claimed that Magellan discovered Australia on his famous voyage round the world in this year. Maps dated 1570 show part of the coast of Australia as the alleged result of his discovery. But the land Magellan touched was the coast of either South America or New Guinea.

1512-1542.—During this period various Portuguese maps were published, on which part of the Australian coast is described with rough accuracy. It is "highly probable," says Major—on the evidence of these maps—"that Australia was discovered by the Portuguese between the years 1511 and 1529; and almost a demonstrable certainty that it was discovered before the year 1542."

1529.—Jean Parmentier, of Dieppe, made a voyage to southern waters; and the curious correspondence betwixt "Java la Grande," shown in subsequent maps, with part of the Australian coast, is due, it is claimed, to his discoveries.

1595.—Mendana had discovered the Solomons in 1567. In his second voyage, in 1595, his chief pilot was de Quiros, who believed that the Island of Santa Cruz was the horn of the great southern continent, and who wrote two memoirs to the Viceroy of Peru, in which he recited the various discoveries already made. These memoirs gave direction to future explorations, and, says Dalrymple, "the discovery of the southern continent, whenever and by whomsoever it may be completely effected, is in justice due to this immortal name." The island which de Quiros named Australia del

Espiritu Santo—supposing it to be part of the great southern continent—was, in fact, one of the New Hebrides group.

1598.—In a Dutch geographical work published in 1598, by Cornelius Wytfliet, is the following passage: "The 'Australis Terra' is the most southern of all lands, and is separated from New Guinea by a narrow strait. . . . It begins at two or three degrees from the Equator, and is maintained by some to be of so great an extent that if it were thoroughly explored it would be regarded as a fifth part of the world." This, it must be remembered, was printed before any discovery of Australia of which we have an authentic account. In a map of 1587 New Guinea is made an island.

1606.—Torres, creeping along the coast of New Guinea, sailed, without knowing it, through the straits which now bear his name. He turned back owing to the mutiny of his crew, having reached 11 degrees south latitude. "Here," he says, "were very large islands, and there appeared more to the southward." These "large islands" are believed to have been the hills of Cape York, on the Australian coast. At the moment Torres turned back, the Dutch yacht *Duyfken*, despatched to explore the island of New Guinea, was sailing along what was thought to be the west side of that country, to $19\frac{3}{4}$ degrees of south latitude. The furthest point of land reached was called Cape Keerweer, or Turn Again. The *Duyfken*, while creeping along what it supposed to be the west coast of New Guinea, was really exploring the west coast of Cape York. "Thus," says Major, "without being conscious of it, the commander of the *Duyfken* made the first authenticated discovery of any part of the great south land about the month of March 1606."

1616.—The ship *Eendraght*—the *Concord*—commanded by Dirk Hartog, touched the Australian coast at what is now known as Dirk Hartog's Roads, and set up a tin plate on one of the islets, with an inscription recording the fact.

1618.—The *Mauritius*, a Dutch ship, discovered Wilhelm's River, near the north-west cape.

1619.—A fleet of eleven vessels, under Frederik de Hautman, touched on the Australian coast, and discovered the cluster of reefs now named Hautman's Abrolhos. The supercargo of one vessel—the *Amsterdam*—was Jacob D'Edel, and Edel's Land is named after him.

1622.—The ship *Leeuwin*—the *Lioness*—discovered the headland that now bears its name.

1623.—The yachts *Pera* and *Arnhem* visited the Australian coast, and discovered that portion now known as Arnhem's Land, west of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

1627.—Dutch authorities claim that "the south-west of the great south land was accidentally discovered, for the space of a thousand miles, by the ship *Golde Zeepaard*, outward bound from the fatherland." Pieter Nuyts commanded this ship, and his name appears on the map.

1628.—The ship *Vianen*, homeward bound from India, accidentally sighted that part of the Australian coast which now bears the name of De Wit's Land.

1629.—The *Batavia* wrecked on the Abrolhos Reef.

1642.—The first voyage of Tasman, in which he discovered Tasmania and New Zealand.

1644.—Tasman's second voyage, in which he was instructed to explore what is now known as Torres Straits, and ascertain "whether in the great inlet there be not found an entrance to the south sea."

1655.—The ship *De Vergulde Draeck* wrecked on the west coast of Australia, and 118 of the crew perished.

1657-1658.—Australian coast visited by Dutch ships in search of survivors and lost treasure of *De Vergulde Draeck*.

1688.—Dampier lands on the north-west coast of Australia, and remains there from January 5 to March 12.

1696.—Vlaming, in the *Geelvinck*, visited the Australian coast in search of the missing ship *Ridderschap van Holland*.

1699.—Dampier's second voyage in the *Roebuck*. Anchors in Dirk Hartog's Roads, at the entrance to a sound which he names Shark's Bay.

1705.—Dutch expedition for the discovery of the north coast.

Here is a tangle of "discoveries" spread in patches over two centuries, and divided amongst four nations. At the end of it all the conclusion by the Dutch navigators is that "the south land in a great measure consists of islands." Dampier himself, when summing up the results of his first voyage, says: "New Holland is a very large tract of land. It is not yet determined whether it is an island or a main continent; but I am certain that it joins neither to Asia, Africa, nor America." In his second voyage, it will be remembered, he almost came to doubt whether the so-called continent really existed, in spite of the fact that in his first voyage he spent nearly three months on its soil.

All this will help the reader to see how little was really known about Australia as the result of two centuries of these "discoveries"! The words on the map of 1531—*Inventa sed nondum plene cognita*—exactly describe it. Not a colony had been planted on it, not a house built, not a seed or a tree planted. The great southern continent lay within its girdle of sea-foam unpossessed and desolate. The contributions to Australia, from the outside world, made by this long procession of "discoveries," and willing or unwilling visits, consist—it may be repeated—of a sprinkle of names, mainly Portuguese or Dutch, along the coast-line, an extraordinary number of wrecks, a tin plate, and a couple of marooned Dutchmen.

CHAPTER V

THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED AUSTRALIA

"TALL, thin, grave, even austere"—this is how Besant, who is an artist in words, describes the personal appearance of Cook, the famous seaman, who effectively "discovered" Australia. Some seven portraits of Cook exist, and for the most part they are in furious artistic quarrel with each other. But from them all, and from such personal descriptions as may be collected, scattered through contemporaneous literature, it is easy to form a picture of the famous circumnavigator.

He was over six feet high, spare-built and erect. The Scottish strain in him is written in his high cheek-bones. The small head might seem insignificant but for the broad, meditative forehead: and the brown eyes, clear and well set as they are, would appear inexpressive but for the definite curved eyebrows above them. It is not a fighting face, but there is strength in the full, long chin, and steadfastness in the firm-shut lips. A fine seriousness lies on the whole countenance: every line in it suggests fortitude. The nostrils are clear and finely cut: the brow is sagacious and meditative: the eyes seem to be searching some far-off sea horizon. As one studies the face the impression grows of a strong, grave spirit; lonely perhaps, and meditative; accustomed to dwell apart.

and familiar with the vast solitudes of the sea; but humane, resolute, unselfish; a master spirit amongst men.

And this is the man who "discovered" Australia in the true sense of the word. Portuguese and Spaniards and Dutchmen had bumped up against the continent by accident, had sprinkled its shores with quaint wrecks and quainter names; but they had never succeeded in bringing Australia, in any practical sense, within the realm of human knowledge. They were never quite sure whether it was a continent, or an island, or even an archipelago of islands. The most famous of Spanish seamen thought he was touching Australia when he landed on an island in the New Hebrides. The greatest of Dutch discoverers, Tasman himself, was confident that New Zealand was part of the great southern land of which geographers had dreamed, and which explorers had sought so long.

It was Cook who, with patient and skilful daring, groped his way, in the *Endeavour*—a ship worthy to be classed with the *Golden Hind* of Drake, or the *Centurion* of Anson—along the whole eastern coast of Australia, sounding his dim and perilous way through strange seas, and defining the vast coast-line—headland and reef and river and harbour—with a scientific accuracy that brought the huge continent at once within the realm of definite knowledge and opened it to commercial use.

The British navy of that date was rich in splendid seamen, and they made memorable contributions to history. But no other seaman of exactly Cook's type can be discovered even in the naval records of that

day. And if it be true that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war," amongst the most shining of these—the nobler and more enduring achievements that history records—few can be found that exceed those of Cook. Canning claimed that he had "called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old"; but that was only a glittering phrase. The seaman made a better contribution to history than the politician. Cook's spacious, enduring, and magnificent epitaph is, that he gave Australia to the British Empire.

Cook's fame springs from three great voyages round the world that occupied the last ten years of his life, from 1768 to 1779. He was forty years of age when on August 25, 1768, he sailed from Plymouth in the *Endeavour*, in charge of an expedition to observe the transit of Venus. Those forty obscure years are a record of hardships endured, of difficulties mastered, of knowledge won, and of success achieved by patient and resolute effort; and the record makes a bit of very inspiring literature.

Cook came of a hardy northern stock, half Scottish and half Yorkshire. He was the son of a day labourer, born in a two-roomed cottage built of mud. He learned the rudiments of spelling in a dame's school in the intervals betwixt crow-scaring. The sea, in a sense, was native to him. At twelve years of age he was a shop-boy in Staithes, a fishing village squeezed into a narrow crevice in the cliffs on which the mighty waves and fierce winds of the North Sea break. The little shop was within actual sound of the sea: the encroaching waters, as a matter of fact, have since washed

away the ground on which it was built, and to-day the sea rolls where the counter once stood. At thirteen years of age Cook became a sea apprentice in a collier, trading on the stormy eastern coast, the best school for hardy seamanship in the world. But by virtue of the Scottish strain in his blood, he had a thirst for knowledge which lifted him out of the forecastle; and when not yet twenty-three years of age, he was mate of a Baltic trader.

But there was something in his blood, or in his brain, which made the deck of a trading-ship too small a field for him; and in 1755, when twenty-seven years of age, he volunteered into the navy as an able seaman. Here was a new school of discipline, a field of great opportunities; for it was the great age of British seamanship, and war with France was just about to break out. Cook was quickly made master's mate, served on long cruises in the Channel—again a splendid school for seamanship—took part in a smart frigate action, and by the time he was twenty-nine years of age was master on board the *Pembroke*, a fine frigate, under orders for America. He took part in the siege of Louisburg, and, later, in the siege of Quebec, under Wolfe. Here in the perilous navigation of the St. Lawrence, Cook found the natural field for his genius. No one ever surpassed him in the skill and patience and hardihood with which he could sound unknown waters or chart unknown shores. He was something more than a seaman, familiar with storms, and as much at home in them as a sea-bird. He was a pilot by bent of nature, cool, steady, vigilant, with a strange gift for reading the puzzling, changeful cipher of shoal and current, of sea and sky and wind,

In 1761 he was made a special grant of £50 "in consideration of his indefatigable industry in making himself master of the pilotage of the St. Lawrence."

But he was preparing himself for something better than even pilotage. There is a mathematical basis to good navigation; and Cook, who had the strong brain of his northern stock, was by this time master of the scientific side of his profession. During the winter months, when his ship was laid up in Halifax, he read Euclid and studied astronomy. He was just thirty years of age, and it may be safely guessed that in the British navy of that period not many officers of Cook's age spent their hours ashore, like him, in a study of astronomy and of the higher mathematics.

He had his reward, in the shape of new tasks. He was put in command of a schooner, the *Antelope*, with the magnificent pay of 10s. a day, and set to chart the harbours and coasts of Labrador, a work which he did with a thoroughness that makes his charts even to-day recognised standards. Later he was sent to survey the foggy shores and waters of Newfoundland.

While engaged in taking soundings on the Newfoundland coast, an eclipse of the sun took place on August 5, 1766, and from the deck of his little schooner Cook took very careful observations. It was a trifling incident, but characteristic of the man; and, as it turned out, it changed his whole career. He wrote a paper on the eclipse, and sent it, with his observations, to Dr. Bevis, a Fellow of the Royal Society. The paper was read before the Society, and the phenomenon of an obscure seaman—a mere warrant officer—who on the foggy coast of Newfoundland could observe an eclipse,

and report it with scientific intelligence and accuracy, arrested the attention of the pundits of the Royal Society.

In June 1769 a transit of Venus was due, and the Royal Society petitioned the King to send out an expedition to observe the event from a favourable point south of the Equator. It was decided to despatch a ship with a staff of astronomers to Tahiti. The astronomers demanded that one of themselves should be in command of the vessel, but Hawke—"the great Lord Hawke" of Burke—who was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time, declared he would rather cut off his right hand than permit anyone but a King's officer to command the King's ship. An astronomer, the famous Halley, had been allowed, in 1698, to command a ship on a scientific cruise, with very melancholy results—on the marine side, at least—and the blunder was not to be repeated. Cook's paper on the eclipse of the sun had made his name familiar to the men of science, and he was accordingly appointed, and sailed in the *Endeavour* on the voyage which made his name immortal, and brought Australia within the realm of civilised knowledge.

Cook's three famous voyages had distinct aims. The object for which the first was proposed was astronomical; but to send a ship into unknown waters for the mere purpose of watching the transit of a pin-point of black across the disc of the sun seemed to the practical seamen of that day insufficient. Cook, accordingly, was instructed to proceed, after the astronomical observations were completed, to "make discoveries in the south Pacific Ocean," pushing as far south as latitude

45 degrees, till he fell in with New Zealand. He was then "to return to England by such route as he thought proper." Australia did not find a place, even as an afterthought, or a postscript, in Cook's instructions; and yet, as a matter of fact, Australia was the chief and enduring result of that voyage.

The voyage lasted three years, and brought Cook immediate fame. He dropped anchor, on his return, on June 12, 1771; on November 28 of the same year he received his commission as commander of a new expedition, consisting this time of two ships, the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*. Cook's task on his second voyage was the pursuit and capture of a continent. For centuries the idea of a great unvisited southern land had haunted the imagination of geographers. It was supposed to stretch up from the Antarctic ice almost to the Equator, and to contain treasures greater than Cortes found in Mexico. Cook was to test that dream by driving the stems of his ships through the whole stretch of the unknown southern waters.

The voyage, on which it is needless to dwell here, lasted for three years. Cook fought his way, through fog and snow and storm, completely round the splintered edge of the Antarctic ice, circumnavigating the globe in those wild latitudes. The voyage cost £25,000, and, as an incident in his cruise, Cook discovered New Caledonia; but its chief result was, not to put a new continent on the map, but to banish the obstinate ghost of an imaginary continent from it.

"Had we found out a continent," says Cook, with characteristic modesty, "we might have been better enabled to gratify curiosity; but we hope our not having

found it . . . will leave less room for future speculations about unknown worlds remaining to be explored." Forster, the naturalist of the *Resolution*, says that in the course of the voyage "it is computed we ran over a greater space of sea than any ship ever did before us; since, taking all our tracks together, they form more than thrice the circumference of the globe."

On his return, Cook, amongst other rewards, was made fourth captain of Greenwich Hospital. "My fate," he wrote to a friend, "drives me from one extreme to another. A few months ago the whole Southern Hemisphere was hardly big enough for me, and now I am going to be confined within the limits of Greenwich Hospital." A seaman so famous, however, was not likely to be left long in Greenwich Hospital. The *Resolution* dropped anchor at Plymouth on July 29, 1775; a year after—on July 12, 1776—Cook sailed in the *Resolution*, with the *Discovery*, under the command of Captain Clerke, as his consort, on the voyage which ended in his death. The object of the third voyage was almost as unreal as that of the second. It was the discovery of that north-west passage by sea between the Atlantic and the Pacific, in the achievement of which so much treasure has been expended and so many lives wasted.

Cook brought to the task all the hardihood, the seacraft, the scientific intelligence which marked his whole career. He rounded the Cape, struck boldly northwards across the Pacific, and fought his way through Behring Straits to the icy latitudes beyond. The most northerly point he reached was 69 degrees 36 minutes, right in the polar ice. But no north-west passage was dis-

covered; and after ten months' battling with polar seas and storms he fell back southwards to the warmer latitudes, the sun-bathed islands of the Equator, where his death awaited him.

The ships had anchored in Karakakoa Bay, in Hawaii, on January 17, 1779, and remained there for a fortnight. Cook himself—with his grave face, his look and tone of command—being regarded by the natives as a sort of god. On putting to sea again, bad weather was struck. The *Resolution* sprung her foremast, and the ships put back into the bay. Some strange change of mood had passed over the natives. They were surly and inhospitable; many thefts were committed, quarrels broke out, and Cook himself at last landed with a small party of marines, ordering his boats to lie off a little distance and wait for him, while he, with his marines, marched up to the king's house, about 200 yards from the water's edge. His purpose was to win the natives by courtesy, and persuade the king to visit the *Resolution*.

He found a noisy crowd of nearly 3000 natives, most of them armed, and the chiefs angrily refused to allow their king to go on board the ship. While the debate proceeded the sound of shots was heard, and a native came running up to say that an English boat's crew had landed on the other side of the bay and a chief had been shot. The story kindled the natives to passion. Some of the chiefs pressed, with menaces and threatening spears, upon Cook. His Northumbrian blood at last took fire, and he struck one of the most offensive of them with the butt of his musket. The little party began to fall back to the boats. Cook's gun was loaded in one barrel with small shot: he discharged it

ineffectively at the crowd; then he fired the other barrel, which was loaded with ball, and killed a man standing beside one of the chiefs. This checked the natives, though they still pressed on the little party till it reached the beach.

The men in the boats by this time had begun to fire on the crowd, and Cook turned round, waving to the boats to stop firing. That movement was intended to save life, but it was fatal to Cook himself. While he faced the crowd of natives, the tall, commanding figure, the cool, stern eyes, held them in check; but when he turned, the magic of his glance was lost. A chief ran in and stabbed him betwixt the shoulders with an iron dagger, another struck him with a club on the head. He fell into the water, and in a moment a crowd of natives had leaped upon him and were holding him under the water to drown him. A corporal of marines and three privates were killed; the rest of the party swam out to the boats and were saved.

Gilbert, the master's mate, was the one man in the expedition of the *Resolution* with a touch of literary skill, and his log gives the best account of the whole tragedy. When the boats returned to the ships without their captain, then, says Gilbert, "a general silence ensued throughout the ship for the space of half an hour, it appearing to us somewhat like a dream. Grief was visible on every countenance, some expressing it by tears, others by a kind of gloomy dejection. All our hopes centred in him; our loss was irreparable." The sailors begged that they might be allowed to arm themselves and go ashore to avenge the death of their captain. Clerke, who had assumed command, was

opposed to the plan, but saw that a direct refusal would be the signal for mutiny. He begged the men to put off their expedition till the fore-mast of the *Resolution* had been got into its place. Negotiations with the natives were with difficulty resumed, and Cook's head and hands were secured. "The head was too much disfigured to be known," says Gilbert, "but one of the hands we were well assured was his from a wound he had formerly received in it which made it remarkable." While taking soundings off Newfoundland in 1764, a large powder-flask Cook held in his hands was by some means exploded, shattering his fingers. When healed, the wound left a scar which divided the thumb from the finger the whole length of the metacarpal bones; and that scar, fifteen years afterwards, enabled his dissevered hand to be recognised.

Cook's death-scene was marked by one discreditable incident. One of the boats that lay off the shore was commanded by an officer who lacked courage to pull in to his captain's assistance. The fury of the seamen and officers against him was great, and he would have been court-martialled but for Captain Clerke's death. Nineteen years later this officer was in command of a ship in the battle of Camperdown, and misconducted himself so grossly that he was tried on a charge of cowardice and disobedience to orders. He was cashiered; but Nelson's stern verdict on the man was that he "ought to have been shot." The incident shows that, even in the band of heroes that gathered round Cook, there was at least one unheroic spirit.

CHAPTER VI

HOW COOK DID HIS WORK

BESANT, who loves to write in large terms, describes Cook as "the greatest navigator of any age." "No other sailor," he adds, "ever so greatly enlarged the borders of the earth." Is there any justification for praise so splendid?

These terms are, of course, too spacious; but it is certainly true that Cook practically gave the Pacific as a field for trade and settlement to the human race. It is the indictment of Spanish seamanship that for more than two centuries the Spaniards held large settlements on the eastern and western shores of that great sea, and they left it unknown. Their galleons crept across from Panama to Manila, along one uniform course, some 13 degrees north of the Equator; and their ships scarcely once, except when driven by stress of weather, diverged from that narrow track. Southward lay the calling Pacific; but it called to them in vain. In its vastness a score of archipelagos were hidden. Australia itself, a Titanic jewel, lay in its purple waters, waiting for someone to claim it. If British seamen had held the trade betwixt Panama in the east, and the Philippines on the west, the challenge of the great unknown sea to the south would have turned half the British stems in that direction. But the hardy seamen who broke first into

the Pacific—Magellan, through the straits far to the south which bear his name, and those who followed him—were strangely unfortunate. As soon as they had struggled, or crept, through that narrow and tangled waterway—and they sometimes took months to achieve the feat—they turned their stems northward along the American coast, and left the great prizes of the unexplored ocean to the east—Australia and New Zealand, and the groups about them—untouched.

But with the Spaniards, their neglect of the Pacific was deliberate. They lived in luxury under tropical skies, amidst subject races, wringing wealth by cruelty from the unfortunate natives, and trying to bar the rest of the world out from any share in the magnificent heritage. Any ship flying a foreign flag that ventured into the Pacific was treated a pirate. But the Spaniard paid the price for those eight generations of slothful indulgence. He lost his seamanship, his daring, his hardihood. Spain, indeed, still pays the penalty of that far-off misuse of a great opportunity. It is to-day a nation without a colony, and without a fleet.

Cook, of course, was not the first Englishman who crossed the Pacific; but the earlier adventurers under the British flag—from Drake to Anson—were buccaneers rather than discoverers. They sought fat prizes rather than new lands. Cook's immediate predecessors, Byron (1764–1766), and Wallis—who actually spent four months fighting his way through the straits—and, the bravest name amongst them all, Carteret—missed making great discoveries in the Pacific in the strangest way; chiefly because, after getting through Magellan Straits, they took a northward course.

But we have only to look at Cook's track, in the first of his three historic voyages, to see the daring character of his navigation. He followed his orders till he reached Tahiti; then, when the astronomers had done their work, he ran boldly down on a southward course to New Zealand, reaching it on October 7, 1769. Here Cook spent six months, charting the coast-line with the scientific patience and thoroughness characteristic of his genius; and when he had finished his task New Zealand had ceased to be a *terra incognita*, the horn of some imaginary continent. It was brought definitely within the realm of human knowledge.

Cook's orders ceased here; all that remained was to "return to England by such route as he should think proper." But to the westward lay the New Holland of Dutch and Portuguese geographers, its eastern coast absolutely unknown. A geographical mystery of this scale was to Cook a resistless challenge; so he turned the stem of the *Endeavour* westward, and on April 19, 1770, struck the Australian coast a little to the south of Cape Howe. From thence he crept northward along the whole vast stretch of more than 2000 miles, sounding almost every fathom of the waters through which he passed, charting every curve and headland of the shore line; shipwrecked once, and in danger of shipwreck often, but never once turning back or losing heart, till he crept through Torres Straits and bore up westward for Batavia.

The passage of the *Endeavour* up the Australian coast was like a ray of light creeping through age-long darkness. It left the long-sought island-continent visible to the whole world. It revealed, lying far to

the south of the track along which the lazy Spanish galleons had crept for eight generations, a new land as vast in area as those Cortes and Pizzaro plundered, and with far happier conditions. The Pacific itself, in the light of a single voyage, became a new sea, with definite navigation.

So if it is Cook's title to deathless fame that in this way he conquered the Pacific for civilised use, it is of more immediate interest to Australians to know that the result of his voyage was to give Australia to the British Empire. It is, in a sense, almost amusing to take the clue of Cook's log and follow the little bluff-bowed *Endeavour* mile by mile along the Australian coast. The *Endeavour*, it must be remembered, was simply a North Sea collier of 370 tons burden, sheathed in wood, as unsinkable as a bottle, and about as weatherly. She was what is called a "cat-built" ship, with apple bows a wide, deep waist, the hull narrowing towards the stern. She was bought at the modest cost of £2800, and Cook, who had Nelson's trick of always falling in love with the ship he commanded, was never weary of praising the *Endeavour*—or, after the *Endeavour*, the *Resolution*. "I do now," he says, "and ever did, think her the most proper ship for this service I ever saw." The small tonnage of the ship was, to Cook's practical mind, its merit. She could be easily careened, and easily handled; and, struggling with the currents that thread the Barrier Reef, Cook was actually able to thrust out oars through the ports of the *Endeavour* and turn her, in this way, into a galley.

Into this ship of less than 400 tons was crowded a complement of eighty-five men, with provisions for

nearly two years. But the *Endeavour*, though seaworthy and handy, was an amazingly slow ship, and the rate at which she crept along the Australian coast scarcely exceeded the walking pace of an active man. Day after day the record of the twenty-four hours' run is "26 miles," "13 miles," "10 miles."

The Australian coast was sighted by Cook on April 19, 1770, the entry in the log at 6 P.M. being: "Saw the land extending from north-east to west at a point." The point touched was apparently that now known as Cape Everard. It was named in the log Point Hicks, after the lieutenant in charge of the deck when land was sighted. On the 22nd they were running so closely along the shore that the log records: "Saw several people upon the beach." The distance sailed that day was 25 miles. On the following day it was 36 miles. Then follow the entries: "Distance sailed, 49 miles": "19 miles," &c. On August 21, Cook hoisted the English flag on Possession Island; a distance of something like 2000 miles parts this from Point Hicks—where the coast was first sighted. This gives an average run, including stoppages, of about 18 miles a day.

Cook's log on the Australian coast is full of interest for Australians. When land was seen on the afternoon of April 19, Cook turned his telescope to the southward, for he knew that in that direction lay the land that Tasman had sighted in 1642. He was himself an observer of the most exact and careful sort, but he had a curious power of generalisation. He could, as his journal shows, deduce the existence of a river from a change of tint in the sea, or the absence of an imaginary

continent from the contour and scale of the waves. And, looking southward from where the *Endeavour* was creeping towards the Australian coast, he doubted whether Tasman's Land was part of New Holland, and expressed that doubt on his chart by a dotted line. Cook's penetrating genius, in a word, anticipated Bass' whaleboat in the guess that a seaway ran betwixt Tasmania and the Australian coast.

On April 20, Gabo Island was passed. Day after day Cook groped his way onward in this deliberate fashion, with the lead constantly swinging, and the busy pencil recording every curve in the shore and every change in the sky-line. On April 28, Cook, in the pinnace, attempted to land, but, as he records, "This I was not able to effect on account of the surf, and then returned again to the ship." The point at which he aimed was slightly to the north of Five Islands, near Illawarra. On the same day "towards the evening," he records, "we discovered a bay which we ply'd up for," and the master in the pinnace was sent in to sound the entrance. At 3 o'clock on Sunday, April 29, the *Endeavour* "at 3 P.M. anchored in seven fathoms of water in a place which I call Sting-Ray Harbour." This is the famous Botany Bay, though Cook himself never gave the harbour that name. The title Botany Bay emerges in Hawksworth's history of the voyage, but no one can tell how or why. In a French copy of an old chart—of a date between 1530 and 1536—and now in the British Museum, there is a doubtful sketch of the eastern coast of New Holland, a little to the north of Botany Bay, with the title "Coste des Herbages," and this—with Sir Joseph Banks' scientific delight in the vegetable

wealth of the soil on which they landed—must explain the familiar title of "Botany Bay."

According to one version, a middy named Isaac Smith, the cousin of Cook's wife, was the first to land. "Now, then, Isaac, you go first," said Cook, and the light-footed lad sprang ashore; "the first Englishman," according to Besant, "whose foot pressed Australian soil." Sir Walter Besant had forgotten Dampier! That middy died a rear-admiral in 1835; and it gives a measure of the amazing growth of Australia to know that so recently the Englishman who first set foot on the eastern coast, at least, of Australia, was still alive.

CHAPTER VII

MAPPING THE AUSTRALIAN COAST

Cook remained in Botany Bay till Sunday, May 6. One of the crew, a seaman named Sutherland, died during the week, and was buried. The south point of the bay—Sutherland's Point—is a record of the first English grave dug on Australian soil.

Cook, passing northward, noted the entrance to Port Jackson, and guessed it "might prove a safe anchorage"; but even his imagination did not realise that behind the two stately "heads" which mark the entrance to the port, lay one of the finest harbours on the globe. An obstinate tradition tells how a seaman, named Jackson, from the mast-head saw the spreading bay behind the cliffs; and, with all the irony of incredulity, Cook named the supposed bay after the seaman who reported its existence. This tale is, of course, pure fiction. Cook named the port after Sir George Jackson one of the secretaries of the Admiralty, just as he named the inlet known as Port Stephens in honour of Philip Stephens, secretary of the Admiralty and Cape Hawke in honour of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and Moreton Bay after the President of the Royal Society, the Earl of Morton. In this latter case, however, a bit of bad spelling has become petrified, and the maps will for all time spell the word "Moreton."

Cook did not land again till May 23, when he dropped anchor in what is known as Bustard Bay. He found the land "much worse" than at Botany Bay. Up to June 4, the *Endeavour* was groping her way through the tangle of islands by which that part of the coast is fringed. The ship was by this time very foul, and Cook was looking for some suitable place where she might be careened; so he sounded his way, in turn, into Edgecombe Bay and Cleveland Bay, but found them unsuitable for his purpose. On Sunday, June 3, he landed again, and again on June 10. The *Endeavour* still crept onward, however, until, on June 11, "the waters showed suddenly from twenty to seventeen fathoms, then," says the log, "before the men in the chains could have another cast the ship struck and lay fast on some rocks." The name Cape Tribulation still marks the reef on which the unfortunate *Endeavour* crashed.

Cook was a seaman of resource, and all the arts known to seamanship were employed to save the ship. Anchors were promptly carried out to haul her off the reef, stores and ballast and guns were jettisoned. The tide was rising; water, in spite of the busy pumps, was pouring in from a dozen leaks, but after lying for twenty-three hours on the rocks the *Endeavour*, with every hand at the windlass, was hove off into deep water, where she promptly threatened to sink. The device of "fothering" her—passing a studding-sail, on which oakum and wool was sewn, round the torn hull—was adopted, with happy effect, and the sorely battered craft was at last beached in what is now known as the Endeavour River. A monument to-day marks the

exact spot where the wounded hull of the famous ship touched ground.

On July 4 the ship was afloat again; by the early days of August she was struggling under the lee of the Great Barrier Reef. Cook had a seaman's delight in open waters, and crept through an opening in the reef to the sea outside. "Since 26th May," he says, "we have sailed 360 leagues by the lead without ever having a leadsman out of the chains when the ship was under sail, a circumstance which perhaps never happened to any ship before." On August 14, however, the current carried the ship almost on to the Great Barrier Reef. No breath of wind stirred; the water was too deep for anchoring, and the *Endeavour* drifted until she was not above 100 yards from the breakers. As the log records, "the same sea that washed the side of the ship rose in a breaker prodigiously high, so that between us and destruction was only a dismal valley, the breadth of one wave." The boats were busy trying to tow the ship off, but in vain. Just at the moment when wreck seemed certain a breath of air lifted the sails. It was sufficient, with the strain of the pulling boats, to hold the ship off the reef until an entrance some 200 yards ahead was reached; and the *Endeavour* crept through it and anchored within the reef. "It was but a few days ago," writes Cook, "that I joyed at having got outside the reef, but that joy is nothing compared with what I feel at being anchored safe within it. This was the narrowest escape we ever had."

It is worth noting that during all the strain and excitement of that perilous hour, when the ship was within 100 yards of the reef, and was expected every

moment to strike, the routine of the ship was still maintained, and the officers, whose duty it was, coolly took a lunar for the longitude, and the observations taken at such a moment were exact and true. The men on the poop of the *Endeavour* had steady nerves!

On August 21 the *Endeavour* passed through the straits between Cape York and New Guinea, with boats out on either side. Cook himself landed and climbed the highest hill. He could see to north-west a long tangle of islands; to the west and south-west was the open sea. He had solved the problem of Torres, and proved that a strait runs betwixt New Guinea and Australia. The English flag was solemnly hoisted on August 22, and, in his own words, "we took possession of the whole eastern coast, from the above latitude, 38 degrees south, down to this place, by the name of New Wales. We fired three volleys of small arms, which were answered in like number from the ship." That fluttering bit of bunting, set up by a group of sailors to the clatter of musketry-volleys, and answered by the deep voice of guns from the storm-battered ship lying near, marked the addition to the British Empire of its richest and fairest province.

Cook had achieved a great feat, greater than he knew, or than can even now be easily realised. Sir Walter Besant, as we have seen, describes him as "the greatest navigator of any age," and to the sober reader that sounds an extravagance. Cook belonged to an age of great seamen. The British flag never flew above a more splendid band of sailors than the men of his time. The "great Lord Hawke," who, amid the storm, smote Conflans' fleet into ruins at the mouth of the Vilaine.

and so saved England from invasion, was earliest Lord of the Admiralty when Cook sailed on his first voyage. Rodney and Howe, seamen whose names are linked to memorable sea-triumphs, were in command of fleets when he came under the flag; Jervis, the victor of Cape St. Vincent, was a middy when Cook was an apprentice on a collier off the east coast of England. Nelson and Collingwood were his contemporaries. It seems a foolish extravagance to claim for Cook a splendour of fame greater than that which gathers round such names.

But Cook was a seaman of a different type from his contemporaries. He had not their genius for battle, their gift for commanding men. In his case it was the union of science with seamanship—the love of knowledge with the passion for adventure—which made him an explorer and a discoverer at the moment when the discovery of new lands was the need of the world. And he was a discoverer of a quite new type. He was preceded in the Pacific in his own age by three famous seamen—Byron, Wallis, and Carteret. Of the three, Carteret probably exceeded Cook himself in the quality of daring. In all the traditions of seamanship there is no tale which, for dogged, long-enduring, and unquenchable pluck, exceeds the story of Carteret's cruise in the *Swallow*—a miserable, leaky, ill-found sloop—in 1766–69. But Cook surpassed his rivals in knowledge, in imagination, and, perhaps above all, in good fortune.

It is idle, again, to compare Dampier, the filibuster, the first Englishman who brought the British flag to Australia, with Cook. In brain-power and literary gifts

Dampier no doubt surpassed Cook. He had in a degree which is almost unique amongst explorers, what some critic has called the clear-sighted "Greek faculty" of seeing things as they were—a vision, luminous, exact, unfailing; and he had something, too, of the Greek faculty for descriptions that are almost sculpturesque in their sharpness of outline. But it was not without some justification that Swift makes his Gulliver refer to the British seaman who first landed on Australian soil as "my cousin Dampier."

Dampier, in a word, had no sober regard for truth, nor much sobriety of any other sort. He is not to be classed with Cook, whose austere face was the index of austere morals and of a sense of duty of the heroic sort.

The Copley gold medal was given by the Royal Society to Cook as a reward for the care and skill with which he mastered the great sea-curse of that day—scurvy. "If Rome decreed the civic crown to him who saved the life of a single citizen," said the president of the Royal Society, in his speech, "what wreaths are due to that man who, having himself saved many, perpetuates in your transactions the means by which Britain may now on the most distant voyages preserve numbers of her intrepid sons, her mariners?" If we are to believe popular tradition, Cook invented the art of health for the sailor. He lost many lives on his first voyage; but, says Sir Walter Besant, "he was on his second voyage to prove the best physician ever known" in the prevention of scurvy. It was "that invaluable discovery of his, whereby scurvy was kept off," which constitutes one of his titles to fame. "Cook's

was the honour and glory of finding out a way to prevent this scourge."

But this is a loose exaggeration. No doubt scurvy was the pest and terror of the forecastle before Cook's time. There is no sea-picture more terrible, for example, than that offered by Anson's ship, the *Centurion*, and her consorts in the famous voyage round the world. When hanging off Juan Fernandez, in 1740, every third man on board the *Tryal* died of scurvy: only a captain, a lieutenant, and three men were able to stand by the sails. On the *Gloucester* two-thirds of the crew perished; when she succeeded in dropping anchor at Juan Fernandez, out of a crew of 300 men, only 80 remained alive. Anson's three ships had 960 men on board when they sailed from England; when they reached Juan Fernandez 626 were dead.

Cook's records, as compared with these, are written in letters of gold. It is true that on his first voyage he lost thirty men out of a total of eighty-five: but up to his arrival at Batavia he had lost only *one* man. While lying refitting at Batavia—drinking foul water, breathing tainted air, and given up to idleness—the men died fast; and not till the ship had got to sea again, and caught the fresh south-east trade winds, did the plague cease. The second and third voyages were to a quite marvellous degree free from sickness.

And yet the secret of the conquest of scurvy was not discovered by Cook. In the United Service Museum is preserved a slab of portable soup, looking like a whitish bit of glue, an actual sample of Cook's specific

against scurvy. It was made from malt, ground and mixed with boiling water, the liquor being then made into a "panade," with sea-biscuits or dried fruits. But in the *Historical Records of New South Wales* (vol. i. page 315) is a letter "from the Lords of the Admiralty to Lieutenant Cook," dated July 30, 1768, reciting that "Whereas there is great reason to believe from what Dr. M'Bride has recommended in his book, entitled *Experimental Essays on the Scurvy*, and other subjects . . . that meal made into wort should be of great benefit to seamen in scorbutic and other putrid diseases, and whereas we think fit experiments should be made of the good effects of it—on your present intended voyage," &c. Cook was notified, in brief, that "a quantity of this [wort] has been put on board the barque you command, and you are hereby required and directed to take care of the following rules with respect to the preparation of the said wort, the administration of it to the sick being strictly observed." Then follow the rules.

This almost unknown doctor, with his long-forgotten pamphlet, has a just claim to the credit so often given to Cook. Cook's merit lay in the vigilant enforcement of the new diet, with other anti-scorbutics. He invented, too, the art of cleanliness in the forecastle. He compelled his crew to observe a personal cleanliness almost Jewish in its ritual, so that when other captains came on board his ship it was customary to say that "every day was Sunday" under Cook's flag. He kept his whole ship free from foul smells and filth of every sort, as a good housewife keeps her kitchen and storeroom sweet. He knew, too, the medicinal value of

occupation, both for mind and body, and he was tireless in keeping his men busy.

Jack does not take kindly to what he looks upon as eccentricities in diet, and one of the rare instances in which Cook writes sharply about his men is where he records "that such are the tempers and dispositions of seamen in general that whatever you give them different in any way, although it be ever so much for their good, it will not go down, and you will hear nothing but murmurings against the man who invented it. But the moment they see their superiors set a value upon it, it becomes the finest stuff in the world, and the inventor is an honest fellow." Cook himself had an iron palate. He could be cheerful on a diet of dog. He records, indeed, how once, recovering from sickness, "the only fresh meat available on board was a dog which was duly sacrificed and made into soup"; and he persuaded his men to take his anti-scorbutics by the process of diligently taking them himself.

Cook married in 1762, when freshly back from surveying on the Newfoundland coast. His wife, according to tradition, was a woman of remarkable beauty, and certainly of more than ordinary sense and fortitude. Their married life extended through sixteen years; and during that period Cook was practically twelve years afloat! Six children were born of the marriage, and a curious ill-fortune attended them. Three died in infancy. The second son was lost with his ship in a hurricane off Jamaica, only a few months after his famous father was killed at Hawaii. The third son died at Oxford, of scarlet fever, when eighteen years old. The eldest son, who bore his father's name, and

had reached the rank of commander in the navy, came to a mysterious end. He started in an open boat from Poole to join his ship at Portsmouth. The boat was crowded, the tide was against it, a rough wind was blowing. The next day fragments of the boat were found on the shore of the Isle of Wight, and half-hidden in the seaweed was the body of Cook, wounded, and stripped of money and watch. No trace of the crew was ever discovered.

Cook's widow lived till 1835, dying when ninety-three years of age. Amongst her household treasures was an old Bible from which her great husband, whose ship never knew a chaplain, was accustomed to read every Sunday to his crew. She kept four days in the year as fast days, during which she never came out of her room. They were her days of household bereavement, and marked the deaths of her husband and her three gallant sons. It is said of her that she could never sleep while a gale was hooting in the sky above her house; she was thinking of the men at sea. She was a fit wife for a great seaman.

CHAPTER VIII

FLINDERS AND BASS

Two names—those of Flinders and Bass—deserve to be written almost side by side with that of Cook, for the contributions to Australian geography they represent. The two men had many points in common. They were both Lincolnshire men. Flinders was a seaman, Bass a doctor; but both were explorers by bent of genius. Each has written his name indelibly on the Australian coast-line, and the career of each ends in a tragedy.

Flinders, like many another British youth, was sent to sea by the prick of Defoe's magic pen. The story of Robinson Crusoe fired his boyish imagination, made the flat landscapes of Lincolnshire intolerable to him, and sent him, at sixteen years of age, as a volunteer on board the *Scipio*, a fine frigate lying at Chatham. It was more than a boyish impulse, however, which made Flinders a seaman. He had taught himself navigation as a science, and with no other help than the pages of Hamilton Moore, before he stepped on the deck of the *Scipio*. Some happy turn of fate threw Flinders under the command of Bligh, who was on a voyage for the purpose of transplanting the bread-fruit tree from the Friendly Isles to the West Indies; and in this way Flinders caught his first gleam of the Southern waters

on which he was to win fame. On his return he joined the *Bellerophon*, and took part in the famous fight on the 1st of June.

When Howe broke the French line on that day, the *Bellerophon* was the second ship from the *Queen Charlotte*. The crews of the quarter-deck guns were suddenly called off to trim sails, leaving their guns loaded and primed. The *Bellerophon* moved in stately fashion athwart a Frenchman, and young Flinders, seizing a lighted match, fired off the deserted guns in succession, as each bore on the stern-lights of the French three-decker. Captain Pasley saw the performance; he seized Flinders by the collar, and shook him furiously, saying, "How dare you do this, youngster, without my orders?" The lad could only stammer "He didn't know; he thought it a fine chance to have a good shot at him." The target—a Frenchman's stern windows—was a temptation too great for any middy to resist.

In 1794 Flinders joined the *Reliance*, carrying to New South Wales Captain Hunter, who was to be governor of the infant colony. On the voyage, Flinders struck up a friendship of the classic sort with Bass, the surgeon of the *Reliance*. Bass is described as six feet high, with black complexion, so short-sighted that he had to wear spectacles, but with a countenance eager, alert, daring. The *Reliance* reached Port Jackson on September 27, 1795, and the two young fellows, with adventurous blood in their veins, and unknown seas and unexplored shores calling them on every side, found it impossible to settle down to the prosaic routine of ship-life. They procured a stout, squat, little dinghy,

only eight feet long, named the *Tom Thumb*, and, says Flinders, "with a crew composed of ourselves and a boy," sailed out to explore the coast-line in the neighbourhood of Sydney. They reached Botany Bay and explored George's River for twenty miles, bringing back a report which induced Hunter to plant a little settlement, called Banks Town, on that stream. Flinders and Bass performed extraordinary feats in the *Tom Thumb*, charting the coast-line, discovering coal, and making serious contributions to Australian geography.

In 1798 Flinders was given command of the *Norfolk*, a sloop of twenty-five tons, with which, amongst other feats, he sailed round Van Diemen's Land, thus demonstrating it—more definitely than Bass did, with his whale-boat—to be an island. In a rough but sufficient way he surveyed the whole coast from Hervey Bay in the north to Van Diemen's Land in the south.

He returned to England in 1800, and in 1801 sailed in command of the *Investigator*, with a commission to make a more scientific and complete survey of the whole coast. He did this with a thoroughness which makes his charts still of the utmost value, plotting the whole coast-line from the Leeuwin to Port Phillip. That this stretch of the Australian shore is sprinkled so thickly with Lincolnshire names is due to Flinders.

Flinders was married just before he sailed on this voyage, and in the preparations for the expedition it is amusing to note the part his wife plays. He was suspected of a desire to carry her with him on the voyage, and Sir Joseph Banks writes to him, warning him that the Admiralty will not suffer this: the mere hint of it might cost him his command. Flinders

writes in reply, declaring he never intended to take his wife with him on the voyage. "Whatever may be my disappointment," he writes, "I shall give up the wife for the voyage of discovery." And at that moment he had been only three weeks married! Banks writes again attributing some disorder in the *Investigator*, which was still lying in Hythe Bay, to "the laxity of discipline which always takes place when the captain's wife is on board." Naval discipline in the early days of 1800 plainly could not survive the presence of a petticoat. Finally, Flinders writes, "I am afraid to risk their lordships' ill opinion, and Mrs. F. will return to her friends immediately our sailing orders arrive." Had his wife accompanied Flinders on that voyage, she would probably have shared his seven years' captivity in the Mauritius.

Flinders reached Port Jackson on May 9, 1802, thence he sailed through Torres Straits, round Cape York, and surveyed the Gulf of Carpentaria. The *Investigator*, however, had grown so leaky that she threatened to sink under the feet of her crew, and Flinders had to abandon his hope of "making so accurate the investigation of the shores of Terra Australis that no future voyage to the country should be necessary." Flinders returned to Port Jackson in June 1803, and sailed for England as a passenger in the *Porpoise*, an old Spanish prize in the service of the colony. Two ships, the *Bridgewater* and the *Cato*, were in company, and seven days after leaving Port Jackson the *Porpoise* and the *Cato* struck on Wreck Reef, the *Cato* sinking in deep water. The *Bridgewater* hung off the reef during the night; in the morning the *Porpoise* was visible, lying

in the surf on the rocks, only her bowsprit showing. The hull of the *Cato* was a complete wreck. The captain of the *Bridgewater* was a timid man. He hovered in sight of the wrecks for a whole day, called his officers again and again on to the quarter-deck, and consulted with them whether they ought to take the risk of sending the boats in to the *Porpoise*. A middy begged that he might be allowed to call for volunteers and take a boat in; but the captain of the *Bridgewater* had no heroic fibre in him. He sailed ignobly off, and left the crews of the wrecked ships to perish. It is not without a certain sense of gratification that one learns that the *Bridgewater* herself disappeared into space, and was never heard of again.

Meanwhile, Flinders, though only a passenger on board the *Porpoise*, took the cutter and a handful of men, sailed to Port Jackson, and brought a ship and a couple of schooners up to the rescue of the crews. Then, with one of the two schooners, the *Cumberland*, of only twenty-nine tons burden, he sailed for England, the boatswain and eight men agreeing to share the risk with him.

The *Cumberland* was as leaky as a sieve, the pumps were worn out almost more completely than the men who worked them, and Flinders determined to run for the Mauritius. He carried a "passport"—a document which certified the ship to be on an errand of peace, and so guaranteed her against capture by ships of war. The run to Mauritius, however, was contrary to his instructions; so Flinders recorded in his log the reasons which induced him to leave his prescribed course, and amongst these reasons he was indiscreet enough to

mention the possibility of obtaining much useful information about the French settlements.

The French Governor of Port St. Louis, M. Decaen, was a suspicious man, with a vehement hate for everything English. Flinders' "passport" was for the *Investigator*, and did not mention the *Cumberland*. The entries in Flinders' log showed a desire for obtaining information about French affairs in the Mauritius of which no Frenchman could approve, and Flinders and his men were treated as prisoners of war. He was actually detained for seven years, Decaen being consumed by a semi-lunatic determination to keep an English sailor of so enterprising a character as Flinders safe under lock and key. He evaded, or refused, instructions sent him from France for Flinders' release. When the unfortunate Flinders reached England in 1810, he found his career practically ruined, and his constitution was even more completely ruined than his career. He spent three years in writing the two immense volumes which record his discoveries, and then died. Not long before he died he said to a friend that "if the plan of a discovery-voyage were read over his grave he should rise up and wake from death." It is easy to imagine how a spirit so adventurous, with such a passion for movement and discovery, must have fretted during those seven unhappy years he spent in a French prison in the Mauritius.

It is curious to know, by the way, that in an indirect way Australia owes its present name to Flinders. The continent was still known as New Holland, though Flinders himself always refers to it as "Terra Australis." In the *Naval Chronicle* for 1814 a sketch of Flinders by

an unknown writer was published, and in a footnote this writer objects to the term New Holland as "unscientific"; "Terra Australis," he added, represents "needless recourse to a dead language." "Why not call it, more concisely," he asks, "Australia or Australasia?" That suggestion of a nameless writer in a footnote on the page of an old naval chronicle gave Australia its present designation.

Bass and his whale-boat made a memorable contribution to Australian geography. Flinders had left Bass behind at Port Jackson, and this restless spirit was bent on adventure. He begged from the Governor a whale-boat, a crew of six sailors—volunteers from the ships—and six weeks' provisions; and on Sunday, December 3, 1797, late in the evening, in the teeth of a strong wind, he crept out through the Heads, and turned the stem of his boat southward, bent on exploring the whole coast-line beyond the point where Cook had sighted it twenty-seven years before.

It was a daring expedition, for a whale-boat is but a frail craft in which to creep along an unknown coast on which such wild seas beat. Bass, however, fought his way steadily southward, and his journal shows with what minuteness he examined and charted the coast, and with what shrewd and practical eyes he noted all the details—the kind of trees, the quality of soil, the run of the streams, and information which would help towards the future settlement of the country. He explored Shoalhaven and Jervis Bay, and rounded Cape Howe, where a gale, blowing for nine days, caught the boat. Bass had now reached the point where Cook had first seen the Australian coast, and he found that "Point Hicks,"

marked on Cook's chart, did not really exist. He was now running along what is to-day known as the Ninety-mile Beach, and past Wilson's Promontory. From this point Bass made a bold dash southward, hoping to reach the islands lying to the north of Van Diemen's Land, but the weather was wild, the boat was leaky; "the water," he records, "was observed to rush through the boat's side pretty plentifully near the water-line abaft. As there appeared to be some risque of a plank starting, I determined to stand back to Furneaux's Land." He reached the Australian coast again, discovered Western Port, and spent a fortnight there—but missed discovering Port Phillip, although it was so near.

Seven weeks had now gone by; he had started with only six weeks' provisions, and the whole return voyage lay before him. On his way back he made a careful study of Wilson's Promontory. He says of it: "Its firmness and vast durability make it well worthy of being, what there is great reason to believe it is, the boundary point of a large strait, and a corner-stone of this great island, New Holland."

The tides along this part of the coast attracted the attention of Bass, and he says:—

"Whenever it shall be decided that the opening between this and Van Diemen's Land is a strait, this rapidity of tide, and that long S.W. swell that seems to be continually rolling in upon the coast to the westward, will then be accounted for."

Those few lines are noteworthy, as they show that, though Bass had run through the straits which now bear his name, and had proved Van Diemen's Land to be an island, he did not realise what he had done. It

was not, indeed, until Bass' observations, after his return, were plotted on the chart, that the real meaning of what he had done was apparent. The whole trip was a feat of unsurpassed daring. In a whale-boat, in spite of wild weather, Bass had explored 600 miles of coast-line, eking out his scanty supply of provisions with fish, seals' flesh, geese, and black swans, and, as Flinders says significantly, "by abstinence," so that he had made a voyage eleven weeks long on six weeks' provisions.

Bass was daring, light-hearted, adventurous in the highest degree, and the fire of an unquenchable gaiety burned in his dark eyes and behind his dark features. He sailed in a little brig, called the *Venus*, for Brazil, purchasing goods in South American ports, and carrying them to Port Jackson. On reaching Sydney, however, he found no market for the cargo of the *Venus*. "Our wings," he writes, "are clipped with a vengeance, but we shall endeavour to fall on our legs somehow or other." His letters on that, his latest voyage, are full of gay humour. "The little brig," he writes, "is as deep as she can swim and as full as an egg. She turns out very sound and tight, and bids fair to remain sound much longer than any of her owners. . . . I have written to my beloved wife. The next voyage, I believe, she must make with me, for I shall but badly pass it without her. Dear Bess talks of seeing me in eighteen months. Alas! poor Bess, the when is uncertain, very uncertain in everything but its distances." Bass sailed later, from Port Jackson for South America, to procure salt-meat and live cattle for the settlement, and both he and his brig disappeared from human knowledge. A ship, eighteen months later, brought news to Port Jackson

that the *Venus* had been taken by the Spaniards, and Bass and the crew had been sent to the mines. In 1808 all British prisoners in Peru and Chili were released and sent to Europe, but Bass was not amongst those released captives. He had been heard of in Lima five or six years earlier, then all traces of him vanished. To exchange the romance of an explorer's life—the wide sea-horizons of the Pacific—the freshness of blowing winds, and the dance of the swinging deck—for the blackness and toil of Spanish mines, and the whip of Spanish slave-drivers, was for the unhappy Bass the most cruel of fates. He died, friendless, nameless, and forgotten, under such tragical conditions.

BOOK II

TALES OF THE EARLY DAYS

CHAPTER I

TAKING POSSESSION OF A CONTINENT

An Englishman, according to an unfriendly critic, discovers nothing and invents nothing, but he has the highly inconvenient habit of appropriating everything discovered or invented by anybody else. He claims it by the title of use. And in the history of maritime discovery there is some apparent justification for this epigram. "The Spaniard or the Frenchman," says Professor Jenks, "descried land, examined it, hastily set up his country's flag as claim of title, then he sailed away"—into mere space. The Englishman, in his turn, arrived, but it was to stay. He proceeded, in his heavy-footed but practical fashion, to make roads and bridge rivers, to discover mines and grow wheat and wool, and, generally, to justify his title to the new land by using it. It is the plain fact that of the countries discovered by Columbus, by Torres, by Tasman, by Mendana, not one of them to-day is under the flag of the original discoverer; most of them have fallen into the hands of one branch or another of the British race.

As we have seen, almost every maritime nation, in turn, had nibbled at the Australian continent; it remained to the Briton to occupy it. And Great Britain, at the end of the eighteenth century, had one special reason which might well have made her eager to seize

a possession so magnificent. At almost the precise moment Cook hoisted his flag on Possession Island, she had sustained the greatest loss in her history. She had lost the American colonies! With it her statesmen had suffered almost a worse disaster—a complete, if temporary, loss of the imperial instinct. They were whipped by mere disaster out of great ideas. They had persuaded themselves that colonies in distant seas were a burden to the national strength and a peril to the national fortunes. The wisest policy was to get rid of all that yet remained under the flag. The colonial career of England was held to be closed. In 1781 the very office of "Secretary of State for the Colonies" was abolished; the "Council of Trade and Plantations" was dismissed from existence. British diplomatists, not content with having lost the Thirteen Colonies, tried to give away Canada.

What use or value to statesmen and politicians in such a mood was that vague, far-off, empty continent, on the other side of the planet, on whose shores, with a splutter of musketry fire, Cook had hoisted the British flag on August 21, 1770?

And yet at the very moment fortune had robbed England of one empire in the Atlantic, she was giving her a new and a happier, if not a richer, empire in the Pacific. But politicians too often have no vision beyond the benches on which their political foes sit; and the last persons in Great Britain to realise this magnificent example of the compensations of history were the statesmen who at that moment administered British affairs.

It happened, however, that the revolted colonies

had for more than a century discharged an ignoble, but very useful, office for the mother-country; an office which history hardly records, and self-respecting Americans to-day scarcely care to remember. They served as a rubbish heap on which England deposited her criminals. Men were sent to the New World because they were unfit to live in the Old World. In this way America, in the blunt English of Defoe, "was made a very common sewer and dung-yard to Britain." For more than a century, in a word, there had been a stream—oddly enough a fertilising stream—of "convicts" flowing across the Atlantic from British gaols to American plantations. The process was for England highly economical, for America it was useful. A sturdy beggar, or a criminal convicted of certain capital offences, in England, became under this system a useful commercial asset. The land that gave him birth, but could no longer tolerate his presence, escaped the cost of his support: and the planters on the other side of the Atlantic enjoyed a perpetual supply of cheap labour.

The convict thus became an asset instead of a liability. The outcast refuse of one land proved highly serviceable to the other. The value of "a common male convict" in the American market was about £10, a carpenter or bricklayer was worth twice as much. Under such conditions a constant gaol-delivery from England to America took place. It is this fact which makes the American historian, Bancroft, somewhat ungratefully declare "the history of our colonisation is the history of the crimes of Europe."

According to an estimate by Lord Auckland, the

average number of convicts annually sent to America amounted to 2000. This is probably an exaggeration; Barton suggests that a fair average would be 1000 a year for the whole period. On this calculation, at least 120,000 convicts were sent from English gaols to America; and this leaves out the cargoes of political offenders sent after the risings of 1715 and 1745. Now the total number of convicts sent to Australia during the whole period transportation was in force did not amount to quite 83,000; so that the United Colonies, while they were under the British flag, were a greater relief to British gaols than Australia, even in the sad days of penal settlement.

But the treaty which gave the United States their national existence arrested this stream of human derelicts flowing across the Atlantic, and English gaols and prison-hulks quickly grew congested to bursting-point. In a sense two men, quite unconsciously to themselves, are responsible for the first settlement of Australia. Those two are George Washington and John Howard. Washington, by the courage and genius which achieved American independence, stopped the outflow of English criminals; Howard, by the new sensitiveness he awakened in the national conscience, made the horrors of English gaols intolerable. British merchants and traders, with the colonising instinct which belonged to their blood, were willing to try the adventure of planting a settlement on the great continent whose shores Cook had explored; but British statesmen were indifferent or hostile. While, however, loftier schemes and more generous motives left them cold, the immediate necessity for finding a land which would discharge

the ignoble office America had hitherto served pricked them into action.

In 1783 an Act was passed authorising the King-in-Council to "fix a place either within or without the British dominions" to which prisoners might be transported. British statesmen hesitated betwixt Gibraltar and the Gambia. An almost accidental conversation suggested to Lord Sydney the eastern coast of New Holland. Matra, who had been with Cook on the *Endeavour*, conceived the plan of a settlement in Australia. His scheme, as laid before the British Government, was to plant at Botany Bay a community of American loyalists—men who found it necessary to leave their country at the close of the War of Independence. They were good fighters, no doubt, but would probably have made bad settlers. They came chiefly from the Southern States, and were accustomed to slave labour; and Matra believed that they could be provided with cheap labour of the coloured variety at the cost of the Australian blacks, or of the island races of the Pacific. If that plan had been adopted, it would have given quite another Australia to the world, a community of mixed colours, and with slavery at its root. Matra explained his ideas in an interview with Lord Sydney, but his suggestion bore very different fruit from that he contemplated. It supplied Lord Sydney with the hint of a convict settlement, on the eastern coast of Australia, sufficiently remote to be perfectly safe. So on May 13, 1787, a squadron consisting of two men-of-war and three store-ships, with six transports, carrying some 756 convicts, of whom 192 were women, weighed anchor, and turned

their bluff bows towards Australia. They carried the strange "Pilgrim Fathers" of a new empire.

Great Britain did not spare money in the equipment of the first fleet. There was expended on it nearly £190,000. A return dated 1793, when the settlement in Australia had been in existence five years, showed that its average cost to the mother-land was £78,840 per annum, and this rose to a vastly greater scale in later years. But though there was much cash spent on the equipment of the first fleet, there was a mournful lack of common sense displayed in the process. The manifest of the transports shows such items as 700 steel spades,' 700 gimlets, 8000 fish-hooks, &c., down to "three dozen flat-iron candlesticks," "three snuffers," and "*one* Bible"! But the list of things *forgotten* is long and melancholy. The very cartridges for the muskets of the marines were forgotten; the clothes for the women-convicts—and there were nearly 200 of them—were left behind. No carpenters or bricklayers were sent out for the erection of houses, no agriculturists to grow wheat, and no superintendents for the purpose of keeping the convicts in order. Phillip, who was in command of the fleet, had to organise a staff of superintendents from amongst the convicts themselves.

No teacher or schoolmaster was included in the staff. Two Roman Catholic priests, who petitioned to be allowed to accompany the convicts—nearly half the number being of their religion—did not even receive a reply to their application. One minister of religion only was sent out, the Rev. Richard Johnson, "one of the people called Methodists," to use the phrase

employed by Major Grose, who was in command of the marines.

The very records of the sentences of the convicts were forgotten. When the convicts were shipped they were transferred on terms of servitude, as a legal form, to the masters of the transports. Phillip was instructed, when the transports were discharged, to secure an assignment to himself of the servitude of each convict from the master of the transport. But all the official papers were left behind. Nobody could tell about any given convict, the nature of his offence, the date of his conviction, or the term for which he had been transported. Of the shovels and other tools on board the ships Phillip records that they were "the worst ever seen, as bad as ever were sent out for barter on the coast of Guinea." The seed was for the most part weevily and incapable of growth. Never was such a catalogue of omissions and disappointments.

The fleet was fortunate in almost only one respect—the character of its commander, Phillip. Phillip has suffered much injustice at the hands of history. He had not the art of advertising himself: there was no gleam of the picturesque about him, and he certainly makes no appeal to the imagination of the world. We get a sudden vision of Phillip, as seen by Captain Landman, after he had left Australia, and had been appointed to the *Swiftsure* of 74 guns. "He was a little figure," says Landman, "with a shrivelled-up face that was almost buried in a large cocked hat." He was afflicted with "a thin aquiline nose and a shrill strong voice," and, like another and more famous seaman, he was always sea-sick in rough weather. His appearance, it

is clear, was commonplace; his speech was prosaic; his despatches are very sad prose indeed. But in his silent, drab-coloured way he must have possessed great gifts. It was a great feat to convoy—in ships ill-found, with a staff sometimes disloyal and always discontented, and convicts at the point of mutiny—such a strange human company across so many leagues of sea, and with such materials lay the foundations of a new empire. Phillip carried the fleet safely to its destination after a voyage of eight months, and the losses by death during that period were made up of a solitary marine and twenty-four convicts.

The skill shown by Phillip in his management of the first fleet may be judged by the tragical misfortunes which attended the second fleet. It sailed in 1790, and consisted of three ships, carrying 900 convicts. Of this number no less than 370—or more than one-third—died during the voyage, 486 on arrival were carried on shore almost at the point of death! The whole human consignment, in a word, was, in effect, at the point of perishing. An officer of the New South Wales Corps, who was in charge of the marines on board the *Surprise*, in a letter written at the time, dwells on "the villainy and oppression and shameful peculation of the masters of the transports." The *Neptune* was so bad a sea boat that even in a light gale the waves broke completely over her. "From the Cape," writes Captain Hill, "those unhappy wretches, the convicts, were almost constantly above their waists in water." The irons put on board the transports were shackles formerly employed in the slave trade, and were of a kind which made it impossible for the poor wretch

who carried them to extend either leg from the other more than an inch or two at most. "It is impossible," writes Captain Hill, "for them to move without the risk of both their legs being broken." Scurvy, hunger, incessant exposure to the sea, brutal treatment by those in authority over them, the monotony of an interminable voyage—no wonder the unhappy convicts died in crowds.

"The slave trade," wrote Captain Hill, "is merciful compared with what I have seen in this fleet." A slaver, he goes on to explain, "had an interest in keeping his human cargo alive; but as for the masters of the transports carrying the convicts, the more they can withhold from the unhappy wretches the more provisions they have to dispose of at a foreign market; and the earlier on the voyage they die, the longer they can draw the deceased's allowance for themselves." The chaplain of the settlement, Mr. Johnson, in a letter, describes the scene when the transports arrived in Sydney. He found the convicts lying in every stage of sickness, many of them entirely naked, without either bed or bedding, the rank stench rising from them being nothing less than poisonous. Many died after the ships came into the harbour; their naked bodies were thrown overboard and washed on to the shore. When the convicts landed "some crept upon their hands and knees, some were carried on the backs of others." A hospital was erected which would hold sixty or eighty at most—and there were 486 to be cared for. Johnson says that at first "they had nothing to lie upon but the damp ground, many had scarcely a rag to cover them. The misery I saw

amongst them is inexpressible." The details he gives cannot be quoted here; they suggest nothing so much as Dante's Inferno.

Yet the second fleet had the experience of the first fleet for its guidance. Its dreadful history shows for how much a cool, clear-headed, humane leader counts in the success of such an expedition, and how certainly the absence of such a leader ensures black and tragical failure.

The whole story of the first expedition shows Phillip to have been possessed of fine qualities of character as well as of intellect: an almost invincible patience, and a courage which, while not of the combative order, was as perfect as that of Nelson himself; while for a certain strain of unconscious and self-forgetting magnanimity he deserves to be classed with Sir Philip Sidney or Outram. That he had something of the insight—the capacity for swift vision and instant resolve—of a great leader is shown by not a few incidents; not the least by the promptitude with which he abandoned Botany Bay and transferred the settlement to Port Jackson. And Phillip certainly saw, as no statesman or scientist in his day saw, the possibilities of the expedition on which he was engaged. Even his sober prose gleams, opal-like, with sudden fire for at least a sentence or two, as he writes about it.

Measured by its consequences the sailing of that first fleet was one of the great events in English history during the eighteenth century. Sir Joseph Banks had a gleam of this when he wrote to Governor Hunter: "Who knows but that England may revive in New South Wales what it has lost in Europe." Those words,

however, were written long after Phillip had built his straggling hamlet on the shores of Port Jackson. But Phillip, before his ships had sailed, wrote to Nepean, the Secretary of the Admiralty, "I would not wish convicts to lay the FOUNDATIONS OF AN EMPIRE"; so he urged that "they should ever remain separate from the garrisons or other settlers as they come from Europe, until their terms of exile had expired." In the same letter he says that "English laws will, of course, be introduced in New South Wales"; but he adds, "There is one which I wish to take place from the moment His Majesty's forces take possession of the country: that there can be no slavery in a free land, and, consequently, no slaves."

There was, it has to be said, a strong body of opinion in Great Britain against the proposed settlement in Australia. Sydney Smith asked, in indignant tone, "Why we are to erect penitentiary houses and prisons at the distance of half the diameter of the globe, to incur the enormous expense of feeding and transporting their inhabitants to and at such a distance, it is extremely difficult to discover. It certainly is not from any deficiency of barren islands near our own coast, nor of uncultivated wastes in the interior; and if we were sufficiently fortunate to be wanting in such species of accommodation we might discover in Canada, or the West Indies, or on the coast of Africa, a climate malignant enough, or a soil sufficiently sterile, to revenge all the injuries which have been inflicted on society by pickpockets, larcenists, and petty felons." Of the new settlement Sydney Smith argues, "It begins under every possible disadvantage. It is too

distant to be either long governed or well defended." "It may be a curious consideration to reflect," he adds, "what we are to do with this colony when it comes to years of discretion. Are we to spend another hundred millions of money in discovering its strength, and to humble ourselves again before a fresh set of Washingtons and Franklins? The moment after we have suffered such serious mischief from the escape of the old tiger, we are breeding up a young cub whom we cannot render less ferocious or more secure." Sydney Smith, in a word, was sure that Botany Bay must sooner or later explode in a rebellion such as that which cost Great Britain America. "Endless blood and treasure will be exhausted to support a tax on kangaroos' skins; faithful Commons will go on voting fresh supplies to support a *just and necessary* war; and Newgate, then become a quarter of the world, will evince a heroism not unworthy of the great characters by whom she was originally peopled."

Sydney Smith, again, found a moral argument against the new settlement: it offered a future too bright to the expatriated felon! "When the history of the colony has been attentively perused in the parish of St. Giles," he says, "the ancient avocation of picking pockets will certainly not become more discreditable from the knowledge that it may eventually lead to the possession of a farm of a thousand acres on the river Hawkesbury." Yet he is willing to believe that the new settlement had a future. "The time may come," he says, "when some Botany Bay Tacitus shall record the crimes of an emperor lineally descended from a London pickpocket, or paint the valour with which

he has led his New Hollanders into the heart of China."

Events, of course, have to be compared and set in the perspective of history before their scale can be realised. Nothing, in fact, is more striking in the whole story of the planting of Australia than the contrast betwixt the apparently trivial character of incidents occurring under Australian skies and the faint interest they awakened, and the tumult and pomp of events occurring at the same moment on the other side of the world, and which for the moment aroused the most profound interest.

When the first fleet was creeping along the English Channel, London was absorbed in the debts and marriage adventures of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. The British Parliament had forgotten everything else in the excitement created by the trial of Hastings, an event on which so much splendid literature has been expended. Yet, set in the perspective of history, of what importance is the marriage of Mrs. Fitzherbert, or the majestic eloquence of Burke in the famous trial, when compared with the fortunes of Phillip and his ships?

At the moment when Bass, in his whale-boat, was rowing southward to discover the straits which bear his name, Napoleon was leading out his stately fleet from Toulon on the great Egyptian adventure. When Macarthur was beginning his little sheep-farm at Camden—the tiny germ from which the vast pastoral industry of Australasia has sprung—the pride of Austria was being overthrown at Austerlitz. Almost the same moment which saw Tasmania proclaimed a colony saw Welling-

ton's troops clambering up the breach at Ciudad Rodrigo.

The drums and tramplings of such events as these are still audible in history; and yet, measured by permanent results, the apparently tame and commonplace incidents in Australasian history have contributed more to the true welfare of the human race, and the permanent wealth of the world, than not a few of the more resounding events which occurred at the same moment of time under European skies, and seemed to overshadow them in scale by an almost measureless arithmetic. Events, it must be repeated, have to be set in the perspective of history, and tried by the final judgment of history, before their true importance can be understood.

CHAPTER II

SOME STRANGE PILGRIM FATHERS

THE fleet dropped anchor in Botany Bay on January 18, 1788. Phillip saw, with a single glance, that the site was unsuited to his purpose, and he set out in an open boat to explore Port Jackson. It was a fitting reward that he, first of all Englishmen, sitting in the stern-sheets of his boat, looked through the stately cliffs that guard the entrance to Sydney Harbour, and saw what he at once pronounced to be "the most beautiful harbour in the world." On January 24, within less than a week after the *Sirius* had dropped anchor in Botany Bay, Phillip gave orders for the transfer of the settlement to Sydney.

On that very day, two ships flying strange colours were seen in the offing. Great was the alarm, and wild the guesses. They were Dutchmen, come to assert their claim to New Holland! They were Frenchmen; and though there was peace at that moment betwixt France and England, yet these particular ships might well have a hostile purpose. As a matter of fact, the ships were the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe*, under the command of the ill-fated La Perouse. It is usual to say that the whole history of Australasia turned on the circumstance that Phillip dropped anchor in Botany Bay six days before La Perouse arrived. There

is "real justification," according to Professor Jenks, for the saying that England won Australia by exactly those six days. It is true that Cook's ceremony, when he hoisted the flag on Possession Island, eighteen years before, did not constitute a valid title until it was sustained by actual occupation. But the title-deed to a continent is not to be determined by an anxious balance of dates; it is settled by a rougher logic. If La Perouse *had* arrived six days before Phillip, it might have occasioned some perplexity at the moment; but it would not have seriously deflected the course of history, for the commander of the French ships had no orders to attempt a settlement, and no means for effecting one.

Two days afterwards, on January 26, 1788, Phillip took formal possession of Sydney Cove; twelve days later—on February 7—the colony was proclaimed, and Phillip read his commission. This was one of the most spacious documents known to history. The territory of New South Wales was defined to include the whole eastern coast of Australia, from Cape York to Tasmania, with the one hundred and thirty-fifth degree of longitude East, for its western boundary; "the adjacent islands of the Pacific Ocean," within the same degrees of latitude as the mainland, were also included. The "New South Wales" which Phillip buttoned up in his commission, in a word, took in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, most of South Australia, the New Hebrides, Fiji, the Friendly and Society groups, and a great part of New Zealand. The Foreign Office or Admiralty clerk who drew up that commission certainly thought imperially, if not in actual continents.

The settlement grew slowly and with infinite suffer-

ing. Not often has human patience been more cruelly taxed than was Phillip's in the control and management of this strange community, set amid lonely seas, and on the edge of an unexplored continent. Here was a stretch of arid soil, say 50 miles by 40, set between the gloomy cliffs of the Blue Mountains and the empty and uncharted sea; a vast natural gaol, and, it may be added, no more capable of providing for its own wants than an ordinary gaol. It was as though the occupants of a score of English gaols had been emptied on the floor of a desert, with no imprisoning walls, almost no warders, and its sources of food supply on the other side of the world. Two years after Phillip hoisted his flags at Sydney an official return showed the number of persons victualled in New South Wales to be 1715. Of these, 1266 were convicts. In this community of nearly 1800 people there were, excluding female convicts, only 46 women; of the 108 children in the settlement 56 were children of convicts. There were *no* free settlers. This was on July 27, 1792. Two years later—August 25, 1794—the numbers in the settlement had risen to 1679, and of these 4137 had to be victualled from the public stores, as though they formed a besieged garrison. The free people consisted of 50 men and 29 women.

Australia now sends enormous food-supplies—many millions sterling in value—frozen meat, fruit, butter, wheat, &c.—to the great markets of the world. In 1910 almost exactly as much wheat came into British ports from Australia as from Canada and the United States put together. It is difficult to realise that a little more than a hundred years ago a tiny community of 4000

people on Australian soil had to be spoon-fed with rations drawn *from* Great Britain, from the Cape, or from China, and stood in imminent danger of perishing of mere famine. But the convicts were not farmers, and there were no instructors sent out to teach them how to farm. Phillip, with characteristic shrewdness, wrote to his official superiors that, if fifty farmers were sent out as free settlers, the settlement would maintain itself. But no farmers came, and the distress to which the settlement was again and again reduced from sheer lack of food seems almost incredible. The chief preoccupation of Phillip was how to find enough for his hungry flock to eat. More than once he cast into the general stock the scanty supply of flour he had in his own bins.

Famine hung like some black shadow over the infant settlement. An expressive sign of the perpetual risk of want under which Phillip's strange charge existed is found in the stern severity with which the theft of food was punished. It was the last and worst of crimes, a sin against the general interest. The first execution in the history of the colony was that of a lad seventeen years of age who was hanged for the theft of food. Later no less than six marines were executed in one dreadful batch for the same crime. In 1790 the food supply threatened to disappear completely. Everyone was fed from the public stores, and steadily, week by week, the rations were cut down till they almost reached vanishing point. On April 20 the daily allowance was so insufficient that labour was almost universally suspended; nobody had strength enough to work left.

Captain Hill, from whose letters we have already quoted, describes himself, when living in quarters with the regiment in Sydney, as being "little better than a leper, obliged to live on a scanty pittance of salt provisions, without a vegetable except when a good neighbour robs his own stomach in compassion for me." When the second captain in the regiment lived on such terms, it can easily be imagined what was the diet of the convicts.

And yet Great Britain was expending in the mere food supply of these convicts an average sum of not less than £23,000 a year. According to an estimate published in England, in 1791 the 2029 convicts up to that date shipped from England to New South Wales had cost Great Britain not less than £300 per man. If this particular division of convicts survived transportation twenty years, it was computed that each by that time would have cost England £1500. The actual cost of the settlement to Great Britain for the first thirty-four years was £10,000,000, an average of nearly £300,000 a year. Transportation was not for England an economical mode of dealing with its criminals.

The price of food, when bought in the scanty market that existed in Sydney, of course soared to strange altitudes. Macarthur, writing in 1795, says that beef, when it could be bought, cost from 4s. to 5s. a pound. A cow was valued at £80; a horse, no matter what its condition and faults, was worth £100.

Perhaps the most curious bits of literature yielded by the early records of the expedition are the returns as to stock. The official list, dated May 1, 1788, shows

7 horses, 29 sheep, 2 bulls, 5 cows, 5 rabbits, 122 fowls, and 87 chickens, &c. These were brought from the Cape. On September 28 of the same year, Phillip records that only one sheep remained alive, and that solitary sheep was the representative of the innumerable flocks of Australia to-day. The "five rabbits," however, multiplied themselves more diligently and tragically than any other animal represented on the original stock sheet, and to-day the Australian States have spent literally millions trying to extirpate their descendants.

The original bulls and cows imported by Phillip plainly grew disgusted with the ignorance of their owners and the scanty grass about them, and they presently wandered off on their own account in search of better conditions. Energetic and persistent attempts were made to recover them, but in vain, and it was supposed that the natives had killed and eaten them. But events showed that these lost cattle were wiser than their owners. Seven years afterwards they were discovered grazing on the rich flats of the Nepean River, and they had multiplied into a fat and prosperous herd. By their own unguided and unassisted exertions they had demonstrated the fitness of the new continent for being one of the great meat-producing lands of the world.

Perhaps one of the worst disappointments Phillip suffered was in the character of the convicts entrusted to him. The convicts, classified on the basis of character, consisted of two distinct groups. One—and the smallest—section was made up of criminals in the ordinary sense of the word—the moral debris of great

English cities; and more useless human material for the purposes of a new settlement can hardly be imagined. Many were old, many were sick and incapable of any form of labour; all were ignorant and helpless, when they were not dangerous. There were, of course, some clever brains amongst the convicts, and some with education enough to attend to the stores and see the provisions issued: but of the more intelligent of his convicts Phillip records, "they are the greatest villains we have." He was discovering, what the whole experience of mankind proves, that when to a rogue's conscience and appetites there is added a quick and educated brain, the result is a human pest of the most dangerous type. When Phillip drew up his marines and convicts on their first parade on Australian soil, the spectacle was extraordinary. It was as though not only a dozen gaols, but a dozen infirmaries—with a stray idiot-asylum or two—had emptied their human contents on that particular patch of soil. It would have been difficult to discover at that moment any other 2000 human beings on the face of the planet less fitted to lay the foundations of a new State. And it must be remembered that for five years afterwards—until 1793—not a free settler was sent out to New South Wales.

The purely criminal section of Phillip's convicts had the helplessness of children, the ignorance of savages, and the fierce appetites of wild beasts; but they had in addition a certain quality of almost incredible simplicity. Many groups broke away from the settlement and took to the bush, usually being recaptured, or returning themselves after enduring incredible hardships.

Their plans of escape when explained were worthy of a lunatic asylum. They hoped to reach China, or the Cape of Good Hope, on foot!

Famine, of course, bred discontent amongst even the official staff of the settlement; amongst such a class of convicts as we have described, it yielded a perpetual harvest of conspiracies and revolts. And yet, working under such conditions, on such a field and with such material, Phillip plodded on from day to day, never losing either his head, or his temper, or even his cheerfulness. He punished rarely, but when he did it was with decision and severity. Slowly, and with an unhurrying, unloitering industry which somehow suggests the toil by which the coral insect builds its cell under the stroke of the sea-breakers, Phillip built up the strange community of which he was the head.

Once, and only once, a flash of impatience lights up Phillip's plodding sentences as he refers to the convicts under his charge. "The only consideration," he says, "which could make amends for being surrounded by the most infamous of mankind, is anxiety to render a very essential service to my country by the establishment of a colony sure to be a valuable acquisition to Great Britain." He adds: "It is to your Lordship and Nepean alone that I make a declaration of this kind." But the truth is that of the sad company of exiles under Phillip's rule many were "criminals" only in a technical sense and in character, and were by no means "the most infamous of mankind."

It was, it must be remembered, a cruel age, an age of ferocious laws and of pitiless administration. The Act which punished pocket-picking with death was still

in force; the hangman's rope was the penalty for a theft of the amount of 40*s*. In a debate on a Bill making it a capital offence to destroy any tree, shrub, or plant in a garden, Sheridan, with bitter wit, contended that "gooseberry bushes ought not to be fenced round with gibbets." He asked whether, under the pretence of protecting nursery gardens, they proposed to make it felony for a schoolboy to rob an orchard. As a matter of fact, many of the convicts sent out to Australia were mere boys, guilty of offences for which to-day a caning would be thought an adequate punishment.

CHAPTER III

THE RULE OF THE WHIP

The list of convicts carried by the first fleet, with full details of their offences and sentences, appears as an appendix to Phillip's account of his voyage. Out of 775 who began the voyage, only twenty were sentenced to fourteen years' transportation, and only thirty-six to transportation for life. Only fifty-six of the whole number, as a matter of fact, had been guilty of any serious offence; and the crimes of which some out of even these fifty-six had committed would to-day be deemed amply punished by a brief imprisonment. The sentences of the remaining 719 were for seven years or under. This single bit of arithmetic shows that the offences of which this little army of expatriated criminals had been guilty were not of a very black tint.

Many of the convicts were political offenders, of whom the so-called "Scotch martyrs" may be taken as a type. Their case is one of the scandals of judicial history. Palmer was a Unitarian minister, a Cambridge man; Muir was an advocate. They were sentenced to be transported for political speeches and writings which to-day would be reckoned harmless platitudes. The Irish convicts, six years later, numbered nearly 2000—about half the whole male population of the settlement.

Of these, many were transported by sentence of court-martial during the rising in 1798. The niceties of law are hardly likely to be observed in a civil war; and many of these Irish rebels were landed in New South Wales without the sentenced men themselves, or anybody else, knowing the term for which they were sentenced.

Some of them were men who had held good positions, and were, as a matter of fact, of good character. Their political opinions may have been villainous, but their morals were good, and Governor King found himself embarrassed in dealing with them. He writes to Downing Street: "We can scarcely divest ourselves of the common feelings of humanity so far as to send a physician, a formerly respected sheriff of a county, a Roman Catholic priest, or a Protestant clergyman and family to the grubbing-hoe or timber-carriage." It marks the exceptional character of some of these convicts—priests or clergymen—that Lord Hobart, replying to King, authorised him to allow to some of these clerical convicts "some moderate compensation if they could be usefully employed as schoolmasters or clergymen."

Amongst the criminals carried by the transports to Australia, in a word, were many who were not guilty of "crime" in the ordinary sense, or were guilty of it only in a degree and in a form which to-day would be visited with a trivial fine. There remained, as we have already said, a mass of genuine criminals—ignorant, brutal, and apparently inaccessible to any other argument than the whip and the hangman's rope. And certainly the English Government did not pretend to employ upon them any milder remedial agencies. The first fleet,

which started with 756 convicts for Australia, had, as we have seen, only one chaplain, one Bible, and not even *one* schoolmaster.

Of course, those first batches of convicts were in no sense the "founders" of Australia. They endured much; but they founded nothing, discovered nothing, built nothing, contributed nothing to the coming State. They resembled a patch of human compost flung on soil which was afterwards to be turned into a garden. The compost has gone. It perhaps made that particular patch of soil a little richer, for, in the generous alchemy of Nature, decay itself is made the servant of growth. But what relation has the beauty of the garden—its verdure, its rich and sweet-scented fruits—to that far-off and forgotten patch of evil-smelling compost! The true founders of Australia were the free settlers that came later, drawn at first by the wide, rich landscapes of the continent; and drawn later, and in vast and hurrying crowds, by the magic whisper of gold. But no free settlers landed in Australia for five years after the first fleet dropped anchor in Botany Bay.

The Irish convicts were the most combustible of all the wild and lawless elements in that early settlement at Port Jackson. They were mainly the human debris from the rising of 1798, and were as inflammable as touch-paper, as simple-minded as children—as ready to follow a leader, and as incapable of choosing one, as children; and they had all the delight in fighting natural to their race and blood. They were perpetually exploding in planless riots, or breaking away from the settlement in semi-lunatic endeavours to reach "China," or the Cape of Good Hope, with no other means of

transit than their own bare feet and sturdy legs. For months they would be docile and good-tempered; then —no one, least of all themselves, exactly knew why— they would explode in some wild adventure. The arrival of a ship with a new batch of convicts from Ireland was generally the signal for an outbreak which shook the whole settlement to its foundations. "When checked," Governor King wrote to Lord Hobart, "nothing more is heard about it till the next ship arrives. It is the people who arrived here by the last ships who make these attempts, and not those who have been here any time."

The settlement, in a word, was not merely a huge, wall-less gaol—full of criminals under sentence, and with no sufficient guards over them. It was, in addition, an insufficiently armed garrison, trembling perpetually on the verge of outbreak and mutiny, and the tale of the greatest and most formidable of these mutinies is well worth telling.

Phillip resigned his office in 1792. After a somewhat helpless interregnum of nearly three years, he was succeeded by Hunter, who, in turn, in 1800, was followed by King. All three were sailors, and King, who had been lieutenant on the *Sirius*, had a good seaman's instinct for discipline, and knew how to deal with mutiny. By this time the population had increased to over 5000, of whom more than one half were convicts. King formed armed associations of the free settlers and of the emancipated convicts, and practically kept the settlement under martial law. There was a constant search for arms, and only one musket was left for each household. Public meetings were forbidden

with a sternness which at this distance of time seems nothing less than amusing.

Under the Seditious Meetings Act of George III, no meetings of more than twelve persons could be held, or, under penalty of death, could continue together one hour after having been required by a magistrate to disperse. King introduced this law into New South Wales, and carried it to an almost incredible severity. He reduced the number of persons forbidden to assemble in "public meeting" to two, and the time allowed for their dispersal to half an hour. He clothed "any person with the description of a free man" with the right to call upon any "public meeting" of two persons to disperse, under penalty of death. A house under whose roof a seditious meeting was held was to be demolished. Two persons detected in seditious conversation actually received 500 lashes each, and the 500 lashes were administered in equal proportions at Sydney, Parramatta, and Toongabbie, as a moral object-lesson to those three settlements. These were stern conditions, calculated not so much to prevent a conspiracy as to provoke one.

And conspiracies came, or threatened to come, almost constantly. Towards the end of 1800, Governor Hunter, in view of the fact that "certain seditious assemblies have been held in different parts of this colony, to the great danger of His Majesty's Government and public peace," appointed a small committee of officers and magistrates to inquire into these reports; and the evidence laid before this committee is still in existence, and makes curious reading. The first witness was a Roman Catholic priest, named Harold, himself

a convict, but a man of character. He refused to give the authority for his statements, but told the committee that "some of the Irish had revealed to him a plot to surprise the outposts, seize their arms, and proceed to headquarters to overthrow the Government." "You d——d fools," was Harold's comment on the scheme, "had you not better be content with the Government you have than set up one of yourselves, which would soon turn out to be one of tyranny and oppression?" Matters, Harold said, were much more forward than was imagined. The plan was to capture a ship, the *Buffalo*, lying in the harbour, and to rouse the discontented settlers at the Hawkesbury. Harold, with unclerical energy, claimed that he "had influence enough to d—— the business, and he had d——d it."

Another witness said that "a number of his countrymen, some of whom wore high heads, were in a plot to overthrow the Government by putting Governor King to death, and confining Governor Hunter. Many of the soldiers were ready to join, and take their guns to South Head. They intended to live on the farms of the settlers until they heard from France, whither the insurgents meant to despatch a ship. Pikes had been made to serve as arms." Of a number of men known to be staunch, each was to engage ten other men upon the principle of secrecy. A code of signals was arranged. The sign by which one conspirator could recognise another was "by placing the forefinger of the left hand in the palm of the right, and closing the same; if this sign was understood, it would be acknowledged by the party challenged clasping two forefingers of the right hand in the left hand; in case of no signal

by fingers, then the accost was to be, 'What news?' which was to be answered by, 'A ship coming'; then, 'What ship?' answer, 'A store ship'; another signal was, 'Are all friends there?' answer, 'Yes, till death.'"

The evidence was strong enough to convince the committee, who reported to Hunter that "various unwarrantable consultations and seditious meetings have been assembled by several of the disaffected Irish convicts, tending to excite a spirit of discontent which was fast ripening to a serious revolt, and consequences the most dreadful." They gave in a list of persons upon whom they advised should be inflicted the penalty of 500 lashes each.

King, a few days afterwards, took charge of affairs. He referred the report of the committee to a second committee, consisting of officers of the New South Wales corps. These took a still sterner view of the situation. "We are unanimously of opinion," they reported, "that the intentions of the insurgents were to effect a plan of a most wicked and dangerous character, subversive of all order and tranquillity"; and they raised the standard of punishment accordingly. Five convicts were to receive 1000 lashes each, and a number of others 500 each, and afterwards "to be conveyed to some secluded isle belonging to the territory, there to remain for the term of their original sentences employed in hard labour." If rebellion could be beaten out of the human body with a cat-o'-nine-tails, King was strongly urged to undertake that cruel feat.

All this goes to show—what might easily be anticipated—that a community consisting one-half of

criminals and the other half of Irishmen transported for rebellion, with very inadequate means of restraint, was in imminent danger of explosion; and an explosion might happen at any moment.

The general state of the colony is painted in lurid colours in a letter by a free settler named Suttor to Sir Joseph Banks, written after the famous outbreak of 1804, and dated March 10, but describing the state of things which existed for nearly twelve months. "The mere recital of the crimes which had been committed during that period," he says, "is shocking to human nature—rapes, murder, and robbery. No person is secure in the colony in either life or property. The settlers are defenceless and unprotected, their very name is a term of derision. What prospects have a settler and his family? His business he cannot properly attend, for he never lays down without the fear of being broken into before morning."

In 1804 came the one insurrection Australia has known, a rising which had in it many elements of real danger, and might well have destroyed the settlement: but which, as a matter of fact, was suppressed in very clever fashion, and in almost the shortest time, in the whole history of insurrections under any sky.

No outward signs of trouble appeared: the settlement moved on the dull round of its existence day by day. But some vague instinct of peril stirred in King's very blood. He had the sense of danger which a man might well have who knew he was living in a magazine which a careless match would explode. And he had reason for his disquiet.

The Irish, at the beginning of 1804, had found, or

imagined they had found, a leader in a convict named Holt. Holt had taken part in the rising in Ireland of 1798, and had been the terror of the county of Wicklow. He was accepted as a general by the plotting Irish in Port Jackson, on the strength of his performances, or of his own account of those performances, in Ireland. But it was one thing to terrorise peasants in Wicklow and quite another thing to lead to a successful issue a rising in the convict settlement at Port Jackson, under a capable officer like King. Holt, as a matter of fact, contributed no useful idea to the plans of the insurgents, and he disappeared when the fighting took place. The one proof of cleverness he gave was found in the fact that he succeeded in saving his own head—or, rather, his back—from the penalty which overtook his fellow-conspirators. He managed so adroitly, indeed, that he lived to amass a modest fortune in Tasmania, and to spend it, years after, in a comfortable old age in Ireland.

Another leader was a French prisoner of war named François Duriault, who, finding a prison-hulk in England intolerable, had volunteered, with a comrade, to go to Australia and begin wine-making as an industry there. He received a grant of land, was paid a good salary, and had every argument for living a quiet life. But France and England were at war, and the chance of leadership in a rising which would pull down the British flag in Sydney was too tempting for him.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONVICT RISING OF 1804

THE secret of the coming insurrection was kept with strange success, considering so many Irishmen were involved in it. Within twenty-four hours of the outbreak no whisper of it had reached the authorities. The signal for the rising was to be given at Castle Hill, between Parramatta and Windsor, where there was a camp of some 300 Irish convicts, under a scanty guard, consisting of a few convict constables, who promptly joined the rebels when the insurrection broke out. March 4 was fixed as the date: the password was "St. Peter." It was confidently expected that all the Irish convicts, nearly 2000 in number, would fling themselves into the fray. Many of the English convicts shared in the plot, and, after the rising had failed, one of the witnesses deposed that the Irish conspirators "had arranged to place their English allies in front, and in such a situation that they would be compelled to fight or be put to death by those behind them." This was ingenious, but hardly showed good comradeship.

March 4 was a Sunday. The day passed quietly; the chaplain at Castle Hill preached his usual drowsy sermon to the usual sleepy congregation. Night came, starless and black. Suddenly a house in the little settlement broke into flames. It was the signal for the

rising, and from every part of the little camp a tempest of shouts broke out. The convicts rushed from their huts and proceeded to plunder every house, and to search for arms and liquor. To their great delight the official flagellator of the camp was discovered, hidden beneath a bed, in one of the houses plundered. He was dragged out with fierce shouts of delight, a stormy court-martial was held over him, and he was flogged with his own whip by one energetic rebel after another, to the very point of death. The luxury of flogging the man who had so often plied his whip on their backs, indeed, occupied the rebels when they should have been marching on Parramatta, and when success or defeat —freedom or the hangman's rope—hung on each moment.

The plan of the rebels, as far as they had one, was to march on Parramatta, which was guarded by only fifty soldiers, and seize the arms there. They calculated that within a few hours they would be 1500 strong, and would have the settlement at their mercy. None of their leaders, however, had wit enough to fling a cordon of sentinels round the revolted camp at Castle Hill, and prevent warning reaching the other threatened points. The watchman at Castle Hill escaped, and, running light-footed through the night, reached Parramatta and gave the alarm. Before midnight the drums were beating in the streets of the little township there, the tiny garrison was under arms, and, for the rebels, the chance of surprise had vanished.

That the possibility of success had slipped out of their hands did not, however, trouble them. They

had adjourned to the summit of a hill near their camp, and were perfectly happy in the possession of a few kegs of spirits, and in the business of plundering the houses near at hand, while their leaders were trying in vain to get them into military shape.

Meanwhile, at midnight, another breathless messenger brought the news of the rising to Sydney. King had a seaman's faculty for acting promptly at the challenge of danger, and in this crisis he showed decision of the finest quality. As it happened, a frigate, the *Calcutta*, was lying at anchor in the Cove. It was on the point of sailing, and if the revolt had been held over for a couple of days the *Calcutta* would have been a hundred miles outside the Heads, and the whole situation might have been changed. King's first step was to ask the commander of the *Calcutta* to land as many marines and seamen as he could spare. It was a seaman's appeal to a seaman—an appeal against mutiny—and within an hour 140 seamen and marines were on the parade ground, ready to open fire on any enemy. Tiny squads of marines and of the local forces were distributed at the chief points through Sydney, and, as Colonel Paterson, who was in command, reported, "Before one o'clock"—within an hour, that is, of the news of the rising having reached Sydney—"I had every male inhabitant of Sydney under the protection of the troops, well knowing, at the same time, that many of them only waited to hear the result of their schemes at Parramatta. Every house was searched for arms; and before ten o'clock on the morning of the 6th," says Colonel Paterson, "I was in possession of nearly the whole." All communications with Parra-

matta, by land or water, were stopped, and Sydney was safe. This was action prompt enough to have satisfied Nelson himself.

King, meanwhile, with a good commander's instinct for being at the point of danger, had himself set out for Parramatta. It was the good fortune of the settlement to have in its local forces, at that moment, an officer, Major Johnston, who was exactly the man to deal with such an emergency. Johnston was a soldier of the swift, hard-hitting type; cool, daring, quick-witted, with the sure glance of a true soldier for the point where to strike. And he struck with a decision and judgment which, on a larger field, and dealing with larger bodies of men, might have won him historic fame. King's best contribution to the defeat of the rebels was the happy intuition which made him select Johnston to lead the attack upon them. Colonel Paterson was directed to remain in command at Sydney; a detachment under Johnston was to march at once to the scene of the rising. The news of the outbreak at Castle Hill reached Sydney at midnight. By 1.30 A.M., Johnston, with a party consisting of two officers, two sergeants, and fifty-two rank and file, was marching at speed to Parramatta. If the rebels wasted their time in flogging their flagellator, and drinking spirits at Castle Hill, King wasted none in Sydney.

Johnston pushed on in the darkness at speed, reaching Parramatta by daybreak, and picking up a few armed settlers—a sheriff's officer, a tailor, some half-dozen convict overseers and farmers—in his swift march; but when he reached Parramatta the force under his command was still the merest handful. He

halted at the barracks about twenty minutes to rest his tired men, and then, by King's directions, divided his detachment; one-half under Lieutenant Davis took the direct road to Castle Hill, the other half, under Johnston himself, marched along the Toongabbie Road.

On reaching Toongabbie, Johnston found the rebels, in number about 400, holding the summit of the hill. How was he, with one sergeant and twenty-six rank and file, assisted by a tailor and a few convict constables and farmers with muskets, to attack 400 rebels perched on a height in this fashion?

The odds were desperate, less than 40 against 400! But as a matter of fact it was *one* against 400. Johnston's little band of footsore privates, if left to themselves, would never have attacked. It was the fierce energy of their leader that drove them through the long night-march, and was now about to fling them on a mass of rebels outnumbering them by ten to one. For so much does one fearless and masterful spirit count in war!

For his part, Johnston was sure both of himself and his men. The rebels were before him, and he did not waste a moment before attacking. Had he halted, and meditated, the rebels would have found time to count his force and compare the numbers with their own, and that bit of arithmetic might well have taught them daring. But the swift, unfaltering audacity with which Jackson came on gave them no opportunity for arithmetical calculations of any sort.

Johnston was a tactician as well as a hard fighter. He knew how to use his brain as well as the muskets of his men, and in his despatch he relates how he

"detached a corporal with four privates and some six volunteers, armed with muskets, to take them in the flank, whilst I proceeded with the rest up the hill." It would be interesting to know the name of that corporal who, with four privates and six civilian volunteers, thus proceeded to take a body of 400 rebels "in the flank."

Meanwhile, Johnston himself was coming up the hill with his little party in military order, and visibly meant business. So disquieting was the cool resolution, as well as the swiftness, of his approach, that the rebels began to waver. Little groups fell back, making for the Hawkesbury Road, where they expected to be joined by the Irish from the convict camp on that river. When a body of rebels, under such circumstances, begins to disintegrate, the process is apt to be swift, and Johnston pushed on, only to find the crest of the hill empty. The rebels were making an active strategical movement to the rear. Picking up his tiny flanking party, with its breathless corporal, he followed them, and after a pursuit of ten miles—for the Irish travelled fast—came in sight of them.

Johnston's fighting party of twenty-five privates, one corporal, and half a dozen civilians, had now marched forty-five miles since they had set out from Sydney in the darkness, a little after the preceding midnight. They were thirsty, leg-weary, exhausted. Johnston looked at his men. He had himself marched twenty-eight miles on their flank, leading his horse before he mounted it; and he knew that his men had reached the limit of their powers. The lighter-footed Irishmen would outmarch them, and escape. Johnston saw that he must, by some trick, detain the rebels till his tired

men could come within hitting distance of them; so he rode quickly forward, accompanied by a single trooper, and by Mr. Dickson, a Roman Catholic priest.

He drew bridle when within a few yards of the rebels. Then he flung up his hand, and with a far-heard commanding voice cried "Halt!" Somehow that call ran over the trampling crowd, and arrested it. The rebels turned their dusty and perspiring faces towards the King's officer who challenged them; some of them began to handle their muskets in readiness for firing. Johnston's eyes ran over the mass before him. It still numbered, as was afterwards ascertained, nearly 300, and Johnston knew that he had only those twenty-five tired privates, with less than a dozen volunteers, a mile or more behind, with which to defeat this formidable and armed crowd. But he never faltered. He had halted within easy speaking distance, and, flinging up his hand again with an imperious gesture, he commenced to speak to the men. His air of cool authority, and something in his haughty figure and commanding voice, shook the mass for a moment. Then its mood began to harden; they shouted to Johnston to come into the middle of them, as their captains were there; "an invitation which," says Johnston, "I refused, telling them that I was within pistol-shot and it was within their power to kill me, and their captains must have very little spirit if they would not come forward and speak to me."

Johnston's figure, with a single trooper sitting carelessly beside him, curiously impressed the rebels. His scorn for their pistols, and his challenge to their captains, somehow pricked their pride: and after a brief

and stormy debate the two commanders of the rebels disentangled themselves from the crowd—or were thrust forward by it—and came up to Johnston.

He sternly rebuked their conduct, and called upon them to surrender, and promised that, if they did, he would make as favourable terms as possible for them with the Governor. One of the two rebel commanders answered that "they would have death or liberty," and showed signs of falling back on his companions in a very warlike mood. Johnston acted with prompt decision. He was still within easy musket-shot of the crowd; but he seized the rebel captain by the throat, and, as he wrote the story afterwards, "claped my pistol to his head"—spelling was not Johnston's strong point: he could perform a daring deed, but could not describe it. His trooper, who must have had a touch of Johnston's spirit, instantly followed his major's example, and seized the other rebel leader, and the two captains were hurried, one with the pistol at the back of his head, the other with the point of a sword betwixt his shoulders, into Johnston's party that just then had come in sight.

Johnston put his captives in charge of a file of men, formed his soldiers in line, and led them in an instant charge on the main body of the rebels. The fire of Johnston's line was quick and deadly, that of the rebels in reply was expended chiefly in air. As Johnston's line, too, came on, swift and unfaltering, its fire—a line of darting points of flame through the white smoke—grew more deadly; till at last the rebels broke, and ran in all directions, leaving twelve killed and six wounded on the ground, and twenty-six prisoners.

Johnston had done a really brilliant bit of work. Within twenty-four hours he had marched forty-five miles, and, with a party of something like thirty men, had crushed an insurrection. The actual time occupied in covering those forty-five miles was only nine hours, as good a bit of marching as is to be found in military records. A sheriff's officer, a tailor, some convict overseers, with six settlers, constituted all the helpers Johnston was able to pick up on his swift march. Johnston, looking back on the story, says of his men: "It shows that our poor fellows did not want spirit, and I only wish we could have had an opportunity of showing it on the Spanish Main." It may be safely said that in none of Wellington's campaigns in the Peninsula was there better marching in the ranks, or better leadership on the part of an officer, than was shown in this business by Johnston and his men.

The first and last insurrection in Sydney was ended, and King, a humane man, punished the rebels with what to the cruel temper of the time seemed strange leniency. He had proclaimed the districts of Parramatta and Castle Hill under martial law; but the proclamation was quickly withdrawn. On March 5, the day after the rising broke out, he issued a general order, notifying that any person seen out after sunset would be fired on by the patrolling military and constables, and apprehended and punished accordingly; but this order, too, was almost at once withdrawn.

Johnston, who had a soldier's sternness and hate of rebellion, dealt more roughly with the rebels as they fell into his hands. Thus, he reports, "Cunningham,

one of the rebel chiefs, who was supposed to be dead on the field, was brought in here alive, and I immediately, with the opinion of the officers, ordered him to be hung up." This was on March 6, the second day after the insurrection had broken out, to be so promptly suppressed. Cunningham, by the way, was executed at Hawkesbury. He had boasted, on his march, that he would plunder the public store there, and, with a touch of grim satire, Johnston hung him on the staircase of that very store.

Out of 200 taken with arms in their hands, eight were hung—three at Parramatta, three at Castle Hill, and two at Sydney. Nine others were flogged, receiving from 200 to 500 lashes each. But Holt, the leader of the insurrection—and who had led it very badly—had his life spared, and was sent to Norfolk Island, where, wrote Governor King, "he can do no arm" (*sic*). The Frenchman, who was joint leader with Holt, but who, like Holt, disappeared from sight as soon as the fighting began, was punished by being sent out of the colony; but with characteristic honesty King paid him his salary up to the day of his departure.

The insurrection, though so quickly trampled out, might easily have succeeded. The plans of the rebels went to pieces. Two parties marching to join them lost their way, or loitered plundering solitary houses, and so failed to join. If King had acted less promptly, or had been served by an officer less daring in temper and swift in stroke than Johnston, the Irish convicts from Hawkesbury, at least 300 strong, would have joined the rebels, and no one can tell what might then have

happened. Australia might have had another history! Johnston served the colony magnificently by his suppression of the rebellion: and this only makes more curious the fact that only four years later he headed another rebellion on his own account.

CHAPTER V

THE STRANGE STORY OF GOVERNOR BLIGH

YOUTHFUL Australia had not only its "insurrection" but its "revolution," and had it early, when it was only twenty years old. It was a bloodless revolution, begun and ended without anybody being beheaded or hanged, and it was accomplished in the shortest time on record in the whole history of revolutions. It took, to be exact, some four hours.

At 6 P.M. on January 26, 1808, Governor Bligh was dining comfortably, and in exactly the company he most enjoyed. It was a little cluster of his tools, men he could at the same time despise and use. In Bligh's career, it is a fact proved by a hundred incidents, that when in command of anything, from a man-of-war to a colony, he regarded with active dislike—not to say malignity—anybody of independent character or respectable life in his immediate circle. In the ill-fated *Bounty*, for example, it was his persecution of Fletcher Christian, one of his officers, that brought about the outbreak. Fletcher Christian was an educated man —his brother was a lawyer who edited Blackstone's *Commentaries*—a man of high spirit and strong will. Bligh had flogged the majority of his crew almost to the point of desperation; but the British sailors of that period were not easily flogged into mutiny. It

was an age in which pity was not counted a virtue, and the whip was accepted as part of the ordinary routine of things, both in the Army and Navy. It was when Bligh crowned all the other indignities heaped on Christian, by bringing against him a charge of stealing cocoanuts, and—a man of pride and spirit—he realised that his character and his career alike were to be ignobly destroyed, that the mutineers found a leader.

For Governor Bligh, January 26 had been an entirely satisfactory day. He had succeeded in making a great many people very uncomfortable. The most influential and useful citizen in the settlement, Macarthur, who created the wool industry of Australia, was in gaol, put there in defiance of law. All the officers of the New South Wales corps, at that moment in Sydney—who formed the only court the settlement knew—had received notice to present themselves to the Governor at nine o'clock the next morning, to answer what was practically a charge of high treason; a charge drawn up by Crossley, a man of infamous character, an English attorney, who was also a convict, whom Bligh, to the scandal of everybody, had taken as his legal adviser. There was terror all through the little settlement, and, as a result, Governor Bligh was happy.

But at ten o'clock, Governor Bligh was a prisoner in his own official residence. According to one scandalous rumour, he was poked out by a private soldier's musket —his coat covered with fluff—from beneath a bed in a servant's room, where he had hidden himself. Another Government was set up, and, with various personal changes, lasted for over two years, till Governor Macquarie arrived from England to put things straight.

Bligh himself was kept a prisoner in Government House for nearly thirteen months; he was then put on board a ship of war, in which he hovered betwixt Sydney and Tasmania, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against both, for eleven months more, till finally he betook himself to England, never to be governor of a colony again. And the man who effected this revolution was Major Johnston, the fine soldier who had crushed the rising of the convicts at Castle Hill, only four years before, and who was as prompt and resolute in his advance on Governor Bligh in his official residence, as he was in his onfall upon the rebels on the Toongabbie Road. It is surely a curious circumstance that the man who crushed one insurrection in 1804, carried out another on his own account in 1808.

Trouble in Sydney was inevitable when Bligh, of evil fame as having provoked the *Bounty* mutiny, was sent out as governor. He was perhaps the most absolutely unfit man for the post at that moment in the British dominions. He no doubt had some good qualities. He was a practical seaman, and a navigator of exceptional skill. When the crew of the *Bounty* mutinied, Bligh was seized, and, with eighteen followers, thrust into the launch, a boat only twenty feet long, with scanty provisions and no chart. But the British Navy of that day bred fine seamen. In that frail and overcrowded boat, and with such scanty equipment, Bligh found his way across 3618 miles of trackless sea, at the end of three months reaching Timor. It was a great feat, and for the moment made the world forget the tragedy of the mutiny, and of the cruelty which provoked it. Bligh was present in the battle off the Dogger Bank.

in 1781. He was captain of a 64-gun ship under Duncan, in the stubborn fight at Camperdown. At Copenhagen he was in command of the *Glatton*, a 54-gun ship, immediately astern of Nelson. After the fight, Nelson himself thanked Bligh on his own quarter-deck for the good service he had rendered.

Bligh had taken part, that is, in great events, and, as far as fighting was concerned, had borne himself not ignobly. But in time of peace he was a mere human irritant, a blister in uniform, a gadfly in a cocked hat. It was not merely that he was cruel, and flogged his sailors in season and out of season. The whip was kept busy six days a week in most British men-of-war. But there was a certain impish quality in Bligh's character, an ingenuity in inflicting pain, an artfulness of surprise in his methods of oppression, which made him intolerable. "The worst of miseries," said Cavour, "is the oppression which covers itself with legal forms." Bligh found that out before Cavour, and applied it—to the discomfort of everybody about him. Nobody was ever sure what he would do next—except that it would be something peculiarly hateful.

Macquarie, who was sent out to take charge of affairs, and officially to rehabilitate Bligh, reported him to be intolerable. He wrote to Downing Street: "There cannot be a doubt that Governor Bligh was extremely unpopular, particularly among the higher orders of the people, and from my own short experience I must acknowledge that he is a most unsatisfactory man to transact business with, from his want of candour and decision. It is impossible to place the smallest reliance on the fulfilment of any engagement he enters into," &c.

Macquarie recites in almost tearful accents the repeated and vain attempts he made to get Bligh to start for England. Johnston, again, in his address to the court-martial on his trial, dwelt on this element of trickiness in Bligh. "He practised," he says, "a tyranny which exhibited an extravagant mixture of system and caprice." Injustice on the part of Bligh was certain; what was uncertain, and kept his unfortunate victims on the rack with suspense, was the form it would take.

On occasion, Bligh could openly defy all law, but his favourite method was to use the forms of law to attain illegal ends and to ruin the object of his fury—all the while moralising like a marine Pecksniff. A strain of shiftiness and meanness, in brief, ran through his nature, so that he was despised, as well as hated. Nothing could exceed the humility of his tone towards his official superiors. His despatches to Downing Street might have been written by Uriah Heep; and he re-wrote those despatches as private letters to his patron, Sir Joseph Banks. But nothing could surpass his ingenuity in discovering, and his arrogance in urging, causes of quarrel with those under his command. He quarrelled furiously with the unfortunate captain that took him to Australia; he quarrelled with equal fury with the captain who received him after his release by the mutineers in Sydney; he brought a court-martial against them both. Each court-martial acquitted the accused officer, but with each unhappy victim Bligh attained his end. One was left with ruined fortunes, the other spent thirteen months in close confinement before reaching a court-martial and its acquittal.

Now, a community such as that at Port Jackson, in

1807, was the very worst field for such a character as Bligh. Nowhere else—not even on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war—was there more absolute authority put in a single hand; nowhere else could be found so many human beings to be tormented, or more helpless under all the caprices of torment; and nowhere else, perhaps, could be found a community in which there were more of the elements of danger present. One insurrection had just been put down; Bligh himself believed a second was attempted within the first few weeks of his arrival at Port Jackson,

The settlement, in brief, was a sort of powder-magazine, and Bligh was a human cracker, cast dancing and spluttering within its walls. Is it strange that an explosion took place? The wonder is that it did not arrive sooner, that it was attended by so little violence, and followed by absolutely no disorder. The most expressive comment on Bligh's character is found in the composure with which the revolution which deposed him was accepted by everybody concerned, including even the Ministers of the Crown in England.

Bligh was the protégé of Sir Joseph Banks, and that famous botanist and explorer, who was a hater of his enemies good enough to satisfy Dr. Johnson himself, was also the most loyal of friends to anyone whom he took under his protection. He had naturally great influence in official circles in all matters relating to Australia. He was a wealthy man and a scientist, and could meet the King's Ministers on a footing of social equality. But he had also been Cook's comrade; he had actually seen Australia, and had even written a book about it. He was consulted like an expert, and

gave his opinions in the accents of an expert. A Governor was wanted for the new settlement, and Banks was practically asked to nominate one. He nominated Bligh, a fact sufficient to prove that, if Banks understood plants, he was hopelessly incapable of judging men. He wrote to Bligh, on March 15, 1805:

"In conversation, I was this day asked if I new (*sic*) a man proper to be sent out . . . one who has integrity unimpeached, a mind capable of providing its own resources in difficulties, without leaning on others for advice, firm in discipline, civil in deportment, and not subject to whimper and whine when severity of discipline is wanted to meet (emergencies). I immediately answered: As this man must be chosen from among the post-captains, I know of no one but Captain Bligh. . . . I can, therefore, if you chuse it, place you in the government of the new colony, with an income of £2000 a year, and with the whole of the Government power and stores at your disposal."

Bligh was thus to have double the salary of King, his predecessor, and naturally would imagine that he had twice his authority. Banks rendered many services to Australia, but all of them put together would hardly compensate for the injury he did the settlement when he thus chose a man of Bligh's record and character to be its Governor.

Bligh sailed for Australia in the *Sinclair*, a transport —one of a small convoy—with Captain Short, in the *Porpoise*, a 32-gun ship, in command; and he promptly commenced a series of quarrels with the unfortunate commander of the tiny squadron. Short naturally regarded himself as being in charge of the convoy, and

Bligh, a passenger on board one of the transports, as having no naval authority. His commission as Governor did not begin to run till he had reached Sydney. But Bligh looked on himself as being in command of the whole squadron. He hoisted his pennant on the *Sinclair*, and commenced to give orders to Short and everybody else. The perplexed commander of the *Porpoise* found himself in straits betwixt his own instructions from the Admiralty and the instructions issued by Bligh from the poop of his transport. Bligh came on board the *Porpoise*, and ordered the ship's company to be mustered, in order that he might read his commission to them. Short told Bligh that if this were done, the command of the ship would be taken out of his hands, as well as the command of the convoy. If Bligh insisted, he said he must retire to his cabin, and consider himself a prisoner. Bligh thereupon addressed him a written order to return to his duty and to take charge of the convoy under his (Bligh's) directions.

The quarrel raged throughout the whole of the voyage, and at every port Bligh discharged a new despatch to Lord Castlereagh, describing the unfortunate Short's "irritating and vexatious conduct to me as Governor and his superior officer of naval rank," and demanding his removal from the ship. Short was no match for Bligh in letter-writing. "The situation I am placed in," he wrote dolefully "never happened before, I am certain, since the navy existed." He had served long, and intended settling in Australia, and he knew how much he would be in Bligh's power there. He wrote to him on board the *Sinclair*, with a sailor's simplicity: "You have repeatedly accused me publicly

of being an unaccommodating man to a person who has it in his power to serve me so much as you might. You also in a former letter alluded to my large family. I am confident that opposition to your wishes is not the way to obtain favour." He shows an almost servile anxiety to disarm Bligh's anger, as he struts on the poop of the *Sinclair*. "I beg, sir, to assure you on my word and honour as an officer, that I have never opposed your wishes from any view but what I thought my duty, and if I have err'd, I only want to be convinced to make every apology that can be desired; but if any explanation is wanting on my part, I am willing to give it to any officer you will honour me to depute, which may bring about a reconciliation for the good of His Majesty's service, and is what I most ardently desire."

Bligh, however, was implacable. He persisted in issuing signals from the *Sinclair* for the direction of the convoy, until the exasperated Short called the master of the transport on board, and told him "if he went before his beam he would fire a shot across his bow; if he did not then drop astern he would fire a whole broadside into him." Bligh, in a word, with pennant flying, wanted to take the lead, in his transport, of the whole squadron. He wrote again to Castlereagh: "I have had my quiet very much disturbed in the midst of ill-health by Captain Short, and I hope their Lordships will see the just cause to remove him from under my command."

Downing Street was disgusted with the whole dispute, and in an official despatch Bligh was informed: "The unfortunate difference or misunderstanding between you and Captain Short appears to have arisen from

very trivial causes, and to have proceeded to a length to which it could not possibly have advanced had you both been impressed with a just sense, situated as you were, of the propriety, if not necessity, of preserving a good understanding with each other."

Bligh, however, pursued the unfortunate Short with unrelenting hate. After reaching Port Jackson he inspired a series of charges against him by one of his own officers, then, by his authority as Governor, constituted a court of inquiry into these charges. The court left to Bligh's decision whether Short should be sent back to England under arrest, to be tried by court-martial, and Bligh, of course, decided in favour of that course. Short was sent to England, tried, and honourably acquitted. But, meanwhile, he had taken his wife and family, with his little capital, to Sydney, for the purpose of settling there, and this put him in Bligh's power. He refused him land, or any supplies of food; and Short tells in his appeal to the Admiralty how he "had repeatedly seen his children cry for lack of bread." He had to re-embark his family for England, and his wife died broken-hearted on board the ship. The equities of the story are expressed with authority in a letter addressed by Rear-Admiral Isaac Coffin to the Admiralty. It runs:

"The members of the court-martial, assembled this day for the trial of Captain Short on charges exhibited against him by Lieutenant Tetley, have desired me to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that he was instigated to bring forward part of the charges by Captain Bligh, the Governor of New South Wales (of which he was

acquitted), whereby Captain Short has been deprived of the command of his ship; precluded from benefiting by the benign intentions of Government in settling on a tract of land ordered to be granted to him; obliged, with a wife and six children under twelve years of age, at an inclement season of the year to return to this country in a leaky ship, whose distresses occasioned the loss of his wife and one child; from necessity constrained to part with those implements of husbandry he carried out with him at a great loss, receiving a bill to the amount of £740, which has been protested; and finally left in indigence and distress."

It must be admitted that Bligh's revenge on Short was symmetrical, and it supplies a striking illustration of his character.

Bligh arrived at Sydney on August 8, 1806; he was deposed on January 26, 1808. During that brief year and a half he succeeded in adding, in a quite surprising degree, to the sum-total of suffering in the settlement. He gathered about him, as a sort of unofficial Cabinet, a group of men, some of whom, at least, were the best-hated and most-despised characters in the whole community. His chief legal officer, Atkins, the advocate-general, knew no law, and was a man despised by everybody. Bligh, who had not even the virtue of loyalty to his own tools, in a secret despatch to Downing Street thus describes Atkins' character: "He has been accustomed to inebriety, and is the ridicule of the community; sentences of death have been pronounced in moments of intoxication; his determination is weak; his opinion floating and infirm; his knowledge of the law insignificant and subservient to private inclination."

Bligh's closest intimates were Fulton, a clergyman who had been sent out to the settlement as a convict, and another convict, Crossley, an ex-English attorney, and a rogue of the first water, who was Bligh's evil genius. He was at once the terror and scorn of the settlement. Johnston's description of Crossley deserves to be quoted:

"For nearly thirty years before he was sentenced to transportation, he had been [in England] the opprobrium of the law and the plague of the courts. He was at the head of a gang who infested the gaol doors of the metropolis, and who, having first excited the unhappy criminals to acts of guilt, made them subservient to all his villainous purposes, preyed on them to the last; and then, often by treachery, delivered them over to the arm of justice. There was no crime in which he had not been implicated; perjury and subornation, conspiracy and forgery, were among those for which he had been tried; but until the last crime for which he was put to the bar, he had always been able to extricate himself by inducing his underlings to commit those perjuries on his behalf which arrested the arm of justice. When at last he was convicted, Lord Kenyon, with expressions of undisguised satisfaction, seized the opportunity of freeing British society from so very worthless a member."

"Many of the unfortunate convicts," Johnston adds, "owed their original corruption and final expulsion from their native society entirely to him. The settlement rang with his infamy." He had been granted a free pardon by Governor King, but this not because he had reformed, but only to make him liable for the

debts he incurred. Bligh found in Crossley a human tool that exactly suited him—a man vile enough to shrink from no crime, and clever enough to clothe crime itself with the forms and solemnity of law.

As Governor, Bligh rendered the settlement one good service. He enforced the orders he brought from England to suppress the traffic in spirits, a traffic which had grown to such a scale that the ordinary currency of the settlement actually consisted in spirits measured by the gallon. Bligh's honesty in the suppression of the liquor traffic, however, was suspected from the fact that when the overseer of his own farm was prosecuted and fined for a breach of the law, the fine was silently remitted.

For the rest, Bligh provoked ridicule by the pomp he affected, and at the same time struck terror into every class by the oppression of which he was guilty. "Nothing less than a coach-and-four in waiting; six or eight light horsemen with a sergeant, two or three footmen or outriders, and he himself riding in a small sulky, with a canvas awning over him with brails, and the sides of this vehicle stuck round with pistols and a blunderbuss"; this is an unfriendly description, but one sufficiently accurate, of the appearance Bligh presented when he drove through the streets of Sydney. His readiness to discover offence, and the fury with which he avenged it, kindled alarm everywhere. He suspected the soldiers of laughing at him in church, whereupon he abused them at the church door at the top of his voice, ordered the entire squad into confinement for some days, and then liberated them without trial.

Some houses had been built on land originally reserved by Phillip as part of the grounds of Government House, but leased to private persons by his successors. Bligh ordered these houses to be pulled down, and the manner in which he did it was characteristic. Here is the evidence, at the court-martial on Johnston, of Sergeant-major Thomas Whittle:

"Had you a leasehold in the town of Sydney, with a house built on it?"—"I had, sir."

"What was the value of it?"—"The value, sir, it stood me in was about £510."

"Did Captain Bligh ever order you to pull down that house?"—"Captain Bligh, sir, came to me one morning about seven o'clock. He came with two dragoons after him. I saw him coming towards the gate, and I went and paid him the compliment that was due to him. He asked me who owned the house. I told him that I did. . . . He bawled out in a very violent manner (and all the neighbours heard it) that he would have the house down by ten o'clock, and that I was welcome to take the bricks off the ground. 'Sir,' says I, 'I have got a lease of this house.' Then he paused a bit, and afterwards says he, 'How long has that lease to run?' Says I, 'It has about six or seven years to run, and it is signed by Governor Hunter.' 'Well,' says he, 'I will have the house down again by ten o'clock, and you shall neither take bricks nor anything else away; but it shall be all mine, house, and ground, and all.'"

Bligh succeeded in spreading a general terror by acts of this character. No one knew who might be his next victim. There seemed to be no limit to his power, or

to the caprice with which the power was exercised. Any assertion of legal rights, or any appeal to official authority greater than his own, moved him to fury.

His advocate-general, Atkins, in his evidence at Johnston's court-martial, was asked: "Has not the Governor at different times endeavoured to influence your opinion in civil causes before you, prior to the Court giving their decision?" "He has, frequently," was his reply, "and has frequently told me that he was the law-giver in this colony, and woe be unto any man who dared disobey him, for his order was equal, or of the same effect, as the laws of England."

CHAPTER VI

BLIGH AND MACARTHUR

Bligh's dislike of everybody in his circle of independent character, of everybody whom he could make neither his tool nor his victim, betrayed him, at last, into the great mistake of his life. Macarthur was at that moment perhaps the most influential figure in the life of the settlement, and he was certainly contributing more to its resources and success than anybody else. A Scotchman, in the prime of life, he had the quick temper and the fighting impulse natural to his stock. He was a soldier, but he had resigned his commission in the N.S.W. Corps to pursue the career of a colonist. He was, it may be admitted, a man of quick resentments and of many quarrels. He fought a duel with Paterson, his colonel, was challenged to a second duel by Governor Hunter, and would have been challenged to a third by King, only a sense of what was due to his position as Governor restrained him.

Macarthur's very success provoked envy: it seemed to an anxious man like King a menace to the community. In a private letter to the Under-Secretary in London, King tells how Macarthur "came to Port Jackson, in 1790, more than £500 in debt, and is now worth at least £20,000." King's equanimity quite fails him as he dwells on Macarthur's persistency and energy,

and he forgets his usual philosophy. "There are no resources," he says, "which art, cunning, impudence, and a pair of baselisk eyes (*sic*) can afford, which he does not put in practice to obtain any point he undertakes." Macarthur at that moment was in England, having been sent there to be tried by court-martial, as a result of his duel with Paterson. No court-martial was held, and Macarthur was directed to return to New South Wales and rejoin his regiment; and King writes: "If Captain Macarthur returns here in any official character, it should be that of Governor, as one-half of the colony already belongs to him, and it will not be long before he gets the other half."

Macarthur was, no doubt, fierce in his hatreds, but he was equally generous in his friendships, and he was a man of boundless energy, with a genius for colonisation. He was the first to realise the illimitable possibilities of Australia as a breeding-ground for fine-woolled sheep. He had commissioned a friend to purchase some sheep for him at the Cape of Good Hope; a few merino sheep of the finest Spanish strain had just then been sent to the Cape, the gift of the King of Spain, and of them three rams and five ewes were purchased and brought to Sydney. Fine wools, at that moment, commanded extravagant prices. The wool from the sheep sent from the Cape of Good Hope brought no less than 4*s.* 6*d.* a pound in London; and Macarthur found, by experiment, that the fleece of these sheep not only grew heavier in Australia—it was finer and softer in character; it was valued in the London market at 6*s.* a pound. He found further, by experiment, that the coarse-woolled sheep already

in Australia, whose fleece was worth only ninepence a pound, underwent a wonderful change when crossed with a Spanish strain. The offspring of such sheep yielded wool worth 3s. a pound in London. At that moment England was importing fine wools from Spain to the amount of nearly £2,000,000 per annum; and Macarthur calculated that within a few years Australia would outrival Spain in wool production—an estimate which facts have proved to be absurdly inadequate.

Macarthur visited England, and made an attempt to float a company there to start wool-growing on a large scale. He failed, for British merchants were timid, and Australia was remote; but he received a grant of 5000 acres from the British Government, to encourage him in his new industry. Macarthur's value to Australia at that moment could hardly be expressed in arithmetic. He was the one man who had a clear vision of the possibilities of the continent, and he was taking practical steps to realise at least some of them.

But this very fact was itself sufficient reason to bring upon him Bligh's enmity. In his evidence before the court-martial Macarthur told how, in conversation with Bligh, he mentioned his sheep and the probable advantages which would result from the production of fine wool. Bligh burst out instantly into a most violent passion:

"What have I to do with your sheep, sir? What have I to do with your cattle? Are you to have such flocks of sheep and such herds of cattle as no man ever heard of before? No, sir." "I endeavoured," says Macarthur, "to appease him by stating that I had understood the Government at home had particularly

recommended me to his notice." He replied: "I have heard of your concerns, sir; you have got 5000 acres of land in the finest situation in the country; but, by God, you shan't keep it!" I told him that as I had received this land at the recommendation of the Privy Council and by the order of the Secretary of State, I presumed that my right to it was indisputable. "D—— the Privy Council! and d—— the Secretary of State, too!" he says. "What have they to do with me?"

Bligh's persecution of Macarthur was persistent and malignant, but always, with the assistance of his pliant Judge-Advocate and the ingenious ex-convict Crossley, under some forms of law. Importation of stills was forbidden. One was sent out to Macarthur from England without his authority. The still was seized when the ship arrived, but the copper which went with it had been used for the storage of drugs, and Macarthur obtained possession of it. Bligh demanded the surrender of the copper, and sent a messenger to seize it. Macarthur prosecuted the officer for the illegal seizure of his property. When the case was tried, Macarthur said the issue was whether a British subject, living in a British settlement, in which the British laws were established by Royal Patent, might have his property wrested from him by a non-accredited individual, with no other reason assigned than that it was the Governor's order. "It is for you, gentlemen," he told the court, "to determine whether this be the tenure on which people hold their property in New South Wales."

The bench was divided, two holding that the seizure of the copper was illegal. Bligh reported this to Downing Street as being "an act of defiance to the

Government on the part of Macarthur, and a proof of the inimicability of his mind to the Government."

A convict hid himself on board a schooner belonging to Macarthur, and sailing for Tahiti; he escaped the search of the Provost-Marshal, made off when Tahiti was reached, and so got free. When the schooner returned to Sydney, Macarthur, as owner, was declared to have forfeited his bond for £900, the cargo was forbidden to be landed, and constables were put on board the schooner. Macarthur thereupon forfeited the vessel, and notified the master and crew that he had nothing more to do with her. The crew had to come ashore to secure provisions, whereupon a warrant was issued for Macarthur's arrest for having "illegally stopped the provisions of the master and crew of the schooner, who therefore had violated the colonial regulations by coming unauthorised on shore."

The chief constable appeared at Macarthur's house with his warrant at eleven o'clock at night. Macarthur refused to surrender, and gave the constable a letter in which he announced: "I never will submit to the horrid tyranny which is attempted until I am forced." A fresh warrant was issued, and a body of armed police arrested Macarthur. He was taken before a bench of magistrates, presided over by Judge-Advocate Atkins, and committed to be tried for high misdemeanours before the criminal court, which consisted of six officers of the New South Wales Corps, with Atkins, as Judge-Advocate, presiding.

Macarthur, however, was a dangerous man when hard-pressed and with his back to the wall, and he was convinced Bligh meant his ruin. He held a bill of

exchange drawn by Atkins fourteen years before, which had been dishonoured, and he now fired it off at Atkins. Atkins promised to pay, but on various pretexts evaded payment. Macarthur appealed to Bligh to constitute a civil court of jurisdiction, with power to compel the Judge-Advocate to pay his debt. A court of civil jurisdiction existed, Bligh replied, and Macarthur must appeal to it. He ignored the fact that Atkins himself was the judge of that court. "It is your Excellency's opinion," Macarthur wrote to Bligh, "that I ought to apply to the present Court of Civil Jurisdiction, of which the person I am aggrieved by is judge, and to call upon Mr. Atkins to issue a writ to bring himself before himself to answer my complaint." Bligh, however, was obdurate; and Atkins majestically "declined to discuss the question of the bill" till the criminal proceedings against Macarthur were finished.

Macarthur was to be tried on January 20, and had thrice applied in vain for a copy of the indictment or information against him. He wrote to Bligh, protesting against Atkins being suffered to sit as judge. "That gentleman," he urged, "is deeply interested to obtain a verdict against me, in so much that, should he fail of so doing, he, in the ordinary course of things, must inevitably descend from the proud character of a prosecutor to the humble and degraded one of a prisoner, called upon to defend himself at the very bar to which he is about to drag me, for the false imprisonment I have suffered under the authority of his illegal warrant." He called upon Bligh to appoint an impartial judge in Atkins' place. Bligh, in accents of austerest virtue, declared this to be both improper and impossible. He

"refused to interfere with the judicial power as by his Majesty appointed"—though his predecessor King, under like circumstances, had done exactly what Bligh was asked to do.

The criminal court met on January 25, and the six officers of the New South Wales Corps were duly sworn in. When Atkins was about to take the oath, Macarthur protested. "I am brought a prisoner to this bar," he said, "utterly unacquainted, except from rumour, with the nature of the accusation against which I am to defend myself." He solemnly protested against Atkins sitting as judge, "because there is a suit pending betwixt us for the recovery of a sum of money which he unjustly owes; because I can prove he has for many years cherished a rancorous inveteracy against me, which has displayed itself in the propagation of malignant falsehoods, and every act of injustice that can be expected to proceed from a person armed with powers against a man whose life and conduct is, I trust, a public satire on his own."

Macarthur further objected that there was "a conspiracy betwixt Atkins and that well-known dismembered limb of the law, George Crossley, to accomplish my destruction." Then Macarthur produced a draft of the indictment Crossley had framed against him, which that ex-convict had flourished in triumph when drunk, and which had been brought to Macarthur. "Here it is, gentlemen," he said, "read it; it will convince the most sceptical that schemes have been framed to deprive me of my property, liberty, honour, and life." At the court-martial on Johnston, Macarthur swore that he believed if he had been convicted,

it was the intention of Bligh to put him in the pillory and to whip him.

Atkins tried to interrupt Macarthur. He threatened, although he had not yet been sworn in as a judge of the court, to commit him. One of the officers—who *had* been sworn in—bluntly said, "You commit! No, sir, I will commit you to gaol." Atkins then declared the court adjourned, and left. But the officers held themselves to be a duly constituted court with the responsibilities of administering justice. They had all been sworn in. They found Macarthur's protest against Atkins to be a good and lawful objection, and they addressed a memorial to Bligh, asking him to appoint another Judge-Advocate.

Bligh replied promptly that Atkins, as Judge-Advocate, could not be touched, and he had a right to commit Macarthur on his own authority. Macarthur, meanwhile, had appealed to the court for protection, as armed persons with a warrant from Atkins were waiting to seize his person, and the court at once put him under the protection of a guard of soldiers. They notified Bligh that "we cannot, consistent with the oath we have taken, or with our consciences, sit with Richard Atkins, Esq., in the trial of John Macarthur, Esq., knowing, as we do, that the greatest enmity has for these thirteen or fourteen years past existed between the parties." Bligh sent a reply, demanding the surrender of all the papers held by the court. The court refused the originals of the papers, but sent copies, and asked Bligh to order "such protection as may be necessary to be given to Mr. Macarthur against a warrant from the Judge-Advocate, for exercising his lawful right of challenge against the said Judge-Advo-

cate." Bligh's reply was a message that the officers were no court without the Judge-Advocate, and a fresh demand for the surrender of the papers in their possession. Meanwhile, Macarthur was seized under a warrant from Atkins, and lodged in gaol.

On the morning of the next day, at ten o'clock, the six officers met as a court; they found that Macarthur had been arrested, and addresssed a new memorial to Bligh. "They had been sworn in as a court," they said; "they were bound to proceed with the trial of John Macarthur, or violate their oath," and they asked Bligh, once more, to nominate some impartial person to execute the office of Judge-Advocate. The seizure of Macarthur, they told Bligh, "was calculated to subvert the legal authority and independence of the court of jurisdiction constituted in this colony by his Majesty's letters patent. We therefore pray your Excellency will discontinue such magisterial proceedings, pregnant with the most serious consequences to the community at large, and that your Excellency will be pleased to take measures to restore John Macarthur, Esq., to his former bail, that the court may proceed on his trial."

The court waited till three o'clock for an answer from Bligh, but in vain. Bligh was occupied in drawing up, with the assistance of ex-convict Crossley, a memorial addressed to himself, declaring that "the crimes of the officers constituting the criminal court amount to a usurpation of his Majesty's Government, and tend to incite or create rebellion or other outrageous treason in the people of this territory." When this memorial was completed, Bligh sent a note to each member of the court the moment after it had adjourned. The note ran: "The Judge-Advocate having presented a

memorial to me, in which you are charged with certain crimes, you are therefore hereby required to appear before me, at Government House, at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, to answer in the premises." Bligh was going to prosecute for high treason practically all the officers of the only regiment in the settlement, the force on which the order—nay, the very existence—of the settlement depended! And he was doing this on the advice, and with the help, of an ex-convict, one of the vilest and most dangerous men in the community!

It will be seen how symmetrical was the mischief Governor Bligh had accomplished. He had disquieted everybody that owned property by his attacks on property. He had alarmed the whole mercantile class by his persecution of Macarthur. The spectacle of an ex-convict like Crossley, a man who was the scandal and terror of the community, acting as the legal adviser to the head of the Government, kindled almost universal resentment. In a population of a little over 8000 nearly three-fourths were convicts or ex-convicts. It was a mass fermenting with evil forces. Revolt was easy and near. The only defence the community had against the outbreak of its wilder elements lay in a single regiment, itself largely composed of ex-convicts. It had eight officers, of whom only six were on active duty in Sydney; and Bligh, with the sinister figure of an ex-convict like that of Crossley at his back, was about to try for high treason the whole of these six officers. The entire community resembled a little village planted under the shadow of an embankment which held back a deluge; and Bligh was playing the part of a mischievous boy—he was digging a hole in the embankment!

CHAPTER VII

THE MAN WHO DEPOSED BLIGH

It will be noted that up to this moment the chief figure in the revolution, the man who carried it out, and who in his single person paid the penalty for it—Johnston—has never been mentioned. He was in command of the New South Wales Corps—a meditative, solitary man, of reserved, not to say remote habits of life. But he was of high character, with courage of the temper of steel, a soldier of quite unusual quality, as was shown in the way he put down the rising at Castle Hill. He had a soldier's instinct for discipline, a soldier's scorn of disorder. He was absolutely untouched by the scandals of the community. He stood aloof with a certain quiet scorn from Bligh's performances, yet gave loyal support to the authorities. He was on the bench when Macarthur was brought before it, on the charge of illegally stopping the provisions of the crew of the forfeited schooner, and joined in committing him for trial. Outside the court he told Macarthur sternly that he had not served his cause in the court by the impetuous way in which he talked.

Johnston, in a word, was, at this stage, beyond any suspicion of disloyalty by even the evil mind of Bligh himself. He stood haughtily apart from the disputes which raged in the community. At the close of the

proceedings of the criminal court on January 25, Bligh despatched a letter to Johnston, who resided some four miles from Sydney, requesting to see him at once. As it happened, however, Johnston, when driving home on the evening of the 24th, had been thrown from his vehicle, and somewhat seriously injured. His medical attendant refused to allow him to leave his room, and a message was sent to Bligh that Johnston was unable to come to Sydney. On January 26, Bligh wrote to him, announcing his resolution to arrest the six officers for treasonable practices, and suggesting that, as he was disabled, he should give the command of the regiment to Major Abbott.

This letter stung Johnston into instant action. Abbott was in command at Parramatta, sixteen miles distant. How could Johnston see unmoved what was practically the whole body of his officers arrested and prosecuted as criminals? This would leave the regiment in the hands of its sergeants. It would destroy its efficiency as a fighting force. It might well drive it into mutiny. As Johnston read the situation, the authority of the Government was being employed to destroy the only force on which that authority itself rested. Then, too, Johnston saw behind Bligh the hateful and sinister figure of Crossley. It shocked not only his sense of justice, but his pride as a soldier, and his instincts as a gentleman. He was roused to instant action, and when Johnston struck, he struck swiftly, and with his utmost strength.

It was evening. His doctor had forbidden him to leave his room; but Johnston, in the presence of what seemed to him an alarming crisis, took counsel with no

one. He rose, dressed himself, and drove into the town. As he came into Sydney, he found the streets thronged, the crowds showing every sign of excitement; and what shocked his military sense was to see soldiers mingling in the groups, and as excited as any. He drove to the barracks, and at once ordered the drums to beat the "assembly." As the sharp rat-tat ran through the streets, the soldiers came running up, and fell into line in the barrack yard. Johnston had at least got his regiment in command, and under his own control.

At the same time, as Johnston told the story afterwards, "an immense number of people, comprising all the respectable inhabitants except those who were immediately connected with Governor Bligh, rushed into the barrack yard, and entreated him to place Bligh immediately under arrest; if he did not, he was told, an insurrection and massacre would certainly take place, and the blood of the colonists would be upon his head. To arrest the Governor would be the preservation of his life," &c.

Macarthur, however, seemed to be the individual in most deadly peril. He had been taken from the custody of his bail, and lodged in the common prison, and many voices proclaimed that he was to be privately made away with. This was absurdly improbable for Bligh's method was always to reach his end under forms of law. But the rumour ran like fire through the crowd, and kindled the utmost excitement. It was visibly at the moment the most pressing cause of alarm; and Johnston, who always dealt promptly with the business immediately before him, sent an order,

signed by himself as "Lieutenant-Governor and Major commanding the N.S.W. Corps," to the keeper of the gaol, directing him to "immediately deliver into the custody of Garnham Blaxcell and Nicholas Bayly, Esqr'es, the body of John Macarthur, who was committed by warrant, dated the 25th inst., signed by Richard Atkins, Thomas Arndell, Robert Campbell, and John Palmer, Esqr'es, it having been represented to me by the officers composing the Court of Criminal Judicature that the bail bond entered into by the said Garnham Blaxcell and Nicholas Bayly remains in full force. Herein fail not, as you will answer the same at your peril."

Macarthur was quickly brought into the barracks, and, being there, his masterful spirit at once impressed itself on the flow of events. Johnston was still being passionately urged to arrest Bligh. Macarthur told him that if he resolved to do this he should not do it without a requisition, and sitting down at the table he drew up the following letter:

John Macarthur and others to Major Johnston

January 26, 1808.

Sir,—The present alarming state of this colony, in which every man's property, liberty, and life is endangered, induces us most earnestly to implore you instantly to place Governor Bligh under an arrest, and to assume the command of the colony. We pledge ourselves, at a moment of less agitation, to come forward to support the measure with our fortunes and our lives.

The original of this document is still in existence, and carries some 150 names. According to tradition

it was signed in the open air, the paper being laid on the breech of a gun. But the appearance of the document hardly bears out that tale, and it is certain that the majority of these signatures were affixed *after* the revolution and when it was proved to be a success, and not before it. Johnston himself, in his evidence at the court-martial, makes little of this requisition. He told the court "it had no share in deciding the resolution I adopted, nor did I at the time consider who signed it, or in fact give myself any concern about it. What decided me was the evident state of the public mind." He was persuaded, in a word, that if he did not put the Governor under arrest, an insurrection—and perhaps a massacre—would ensue.

No other man understood the little community so well as Johnston. He knew that there were forces making for disorder, ready to break out on the slightest chance. The natural allies of the Government, the few respectable and independent inhabitants, were disquieted and alarmed by Bligh's proceedings. Of the poorer class, not a few, when Bligh threatened to pull down their houses, had assigned them to persons of standing and respectability, by way of protection, and, as Johnston afterwards told the court, when being tried, "when it became known that of this class of society seven individuals—six of them officers in the army, and constituting the criminal court—were to be at once imprisoned and sentenced to death or banishment, every hope seemed at once to vanish." It must always be remembered that only four years before, Johnston himself had put down a rising of the convicts which might well have destroyed the whole settlement.

Johnston made up his mind with a soldier's promptitude, and he acted with characteristic resolution. He formed his men into column, and marched at once towards Government House. An immense crowd followed the regiment; but Johnston threw his men into line in front of Government House, and kept the crowd at a distance. He had previously sent forward a couple of officers with the following letter addressed to the Governor:

SIR,—I am called upon to execute a most painful duty. You are charged, by the respectable inhabitants, of crimes that render you unfit to exercise the supreme authority another moment in this colony; and in that charge all the officers under my command have joined.

I therefore require you, in his Majesty's sacred name, to resign your authority, and to submit to the arrest which I hereby place you under, by the advice of all my officers, and by the advice of every respectable inhabitant in the town of Sydney.—I am, &c., GEORGE JOHNSTON,

Acting Lieutenant-Governor, and Major commanding N.S.W. Corps.

While the regiment halted, drawn up steadily in line, a message came back from the two officers that Bligh could not be discovered; he was concealing himself. As it happened, the Provost-Marshal had at once sent to the Governor the order addressed to the keeper of the gaol for the surrender of Macarthur, and Bligh, who was painfully familiar with mutiny, at once realised what was on foot. He had just finished dining; Campbell, Palmer, and the ex-convict Crossley were in the house with him. According to his own evidence. "I retired instantly into a back room . . . to

deliberate on the means to be adopted for the restoration of my authority." Johnston, meanwhile, had entered Government House, and stood there himself at the entrance, as he said, "to protect the family from injury or insult," and he now despatched six soldiers to search the building, three going up one staircase and three the other. There is a dispute as to the manner in which Bligh was discovered. One of the sergeants who searched, and who was present at the discovery—Whittle—was asked at the court-martial, "In what situation did you first see Governor Bligh?" He answered, "Just come from under a bed all dirty with feathers and cobwebs of one sort or another."

It is certain that Bligh had betaken himself to a servant's room, where, according to his own account, he was employed in tearing up papers. He heard the soldiers examining the other rooms. Presently, as he told the story, about eight or ten broke into the room where he was, and a cry was made that the Governor was found. Said Bligh: "I was then a little confused in fixing and arranging my papers inside my waistcoat; I put my right hand up to prevent them from falling through: a fellow came up to me, and with his bayonet presented, says, 'D—— your eyes, if you don't take your hand out of there, I will whip this into you immediately.' I immediately called out, 'Sergeant, keep this man off'; I have no arms—stand off.' At this moment, in the middle of a great crowd, came Lieutenant Minchin, and called out, 'Sergeant, keep the men off, the Governor is not armed; I will answer for it, the Governor is not armed'; upon which Mr. Minchin took hold of me by the arm, and led me

downstairs, telling me that Major Johnston wanted me below."

Lieutenant Minchin himself, at the court-martial, gave his version of the incident:

"The Governor was standing up; there were two or three soldiers in the room; two, I recollect perfectly. His bosom was open, his shirt frill out, and he appeared to me to be in the act of putting it into his waistcoat at the time I went into the room. From putting his hand to put the frill of his shirt in, one of the soldiers called out to me, 'Take care, he has got a pistol.' I then ordered the soldiers away, and I said to the Governor that I was extremely sorry he suffered himself to be found in that manner; that he had not come forward in the first instance to meet the officers. A corporal who was in the room, said, as he was going out, 'We found him there, sir' (pointing under the bedstead). The fore-part of his coat, the lapels, were full of dust, and the back-part full of feathers: he appeared to be very much agitated; indeed, I never saw a man so much frightened in my life, in appearance. When I went into the room he reached his hand to me, and asked me if I would protect his life. I assured him his life was not in danger, and that I would pledge my own for the safety of his."

There is no reason to doubt Bligh's personal courage, but he was a man given to indirect methods, and on the whole it seems clear that he did try to evade arrest in a fashion which, for anyone of keener self-respect, would have been intolerable. Bligh's daughter, Mrs. Putland, played a much more energetic part in the business. She stood at the door of Government

House, and endeavoured to prevent the soldiers entering. When Bligh and Johnston met, as Minchin tells the story, "The Governor came towards him, and I must acknowledge it surprised me to see the Governor reach his hand towards him: Colonel Johnston told him he had taken that step at the request of the whole of the inhabitants, and that he was sorry he was obliged to do it for the preservation of the colony. Governor Bligh thanked him for the handsome manner in which he had carried the wishes of the inhabitants into effect, and said that had he before known he was so much disliked by the inhabitants, he would have left the colony."

The "revolution" was complete, and there never was one which had so little of the revolutionary note about it. The stern routine of the settlement went on, the course of law was maintained. The criminal court met, and Johnston, as Lieutenant-Governor, appointed a new Judge-Advocate. But he did not select a partisan: he appointed the surveyor-general of the colony, Mr. Grimes, a man of character so high that when Macquarie, two years later, arrived to put matters straight, he left him undisturbed in his office. The trial of Macarthur was taken up and carried through with impartiality and thoroughness, with the result that he was acquitted, and the warrant on which he had been arrested was declared to be illegally issued and served.

On February 2—within a week, that is—Johnston reported the whole business to his superior officer, Colonel Paterson, who was at Port Dalrymple. Paterson took more than a month to consider matters, but

declined for the present to come to Sydney, and wrote: "I do not at present purpose making any particular change in the arrangement you have formed at Sydney until I hear from his Majesty's Ministers."

As his senior officer refused to interfere, Johnston, on April 11, wrote to Lord Castlereagh, telling the whole story. "I had no alternative," he wrote, "but to put Governor Bligh under arrest, to prevent an insurrection of the inhabitants, and to secure him and the persons he confided in from being massacred by the incensed multitude. I have sacrificed comparative ease," he added, "and taken upon myself so great a responsibility rather than submit to be a witness of his Majesty's sacred name being profaned and dishonoured by deeds of injustice and violence."

Meanwhile, Johnston proclaimed martial law. Crossley was indicted, tried, and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. Macarthur, as the ablest man available, was appointed Colonial Secretary, without salary, and the routine of government was maintained with a strictness and an economy hitherto unknown. In July —more than six months after the revolution—Colonel Foveaux arrived from England on his way to Norfolk Island, where he was to fill the post of Lieutenant-Governor, and Johnston surrendered the charge of affairs into his hands. Bligh, claiming still to be commander-in-chief, at once addressed an order to him to put himself at the head of the New South Wales Corps and reinstate him; but Foveaux replied that as Bligh had been out of power for six months, and his suspension was submitted to his Majesty's Ministers, he could not interfere, and he must maintain the *status*

quo until relieved by Paterson's arrival, or by despatches from England.

The whole situation was extraordinary. Bligh was treated as a prisoner, but still occupied Government House, and continued to occupy it for thirteen months —till February 20, 1809. The new Government had its headquarters on one side of what was called the Tank Stream—now known as Pitt Street—and the sentinels at the doors of Government House at the top of Bridge Street were within hail of it.

Bligh, for six months after he had been seized and deposed, made no appeal to Paterson, who held a commission as Lieutenant-Governor, and was the senior officer of the New South Wales Corps. He bombarded Lord Castlereagh with despatches full of alarms and accusations, but Downing Street was tired of Governor Bligh and his complaints. Even a revolution failed to prick the British authorities into action; and for two years after he had been deposed, as Bligh himself complained at the court-martial, "he did not get a word from Lord Castlereagh." Paterson and Foveaux in succession thus supported the new order of things which Johnston had called into existence, and Lord Castlereagh for two years never said a word against it. On December 15 a notice in the *Gazette* intimated that the War Office had promoted Paterson to be a colonel, and Johnston to be lieutenant-colonel. The War Office was decorating "rebels," instead of shooting them!

Bligh at last appealed to Paterson, who said, drily, it was strange that Bligh had failed to communicate with him, the colonel of the guilty corps that carried out the revolution, until six months after that event had taken

place; and he told Bligh, bluntly, "Your own interests require an immediate attendance before those who only can decide your conduct." Everybody, in a word, was anxious that Bligh should betake himself to England.

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF A STRANGE FIGHT

In January 1809, Paterson arrived at Sydney in the *Porpoise*. Bligh's commission as Governor gave him authority over the ship, an authority which he now claimed to exercise. He warned its commander that he was to obey no orders but his, and instructed him to place Paterson himself under arrest. Paterson, it was true, had taken no part in the "revolution," and he held the King's commission as Lieutenant-Governor. To arrest him would be to repeat, in slightly different terms, Johnston's own offence. But Bligh was scorched with a longing to hit *somebody*, and at the moment Paterson seemed the only person within his reach.

Paterson reported all this to Lord Castlereagh, and added that Bligh "bore the most rancorous ill-will to any officer or inhabitant who could in any way interfere with his longing to gratify his unsatiable, Satanic disposition"!

Bligh cherished the delightful plan, as soon as he got command of the *Porpoise*, of bringing her guns to bear on the guilty settlement that had deposed him. At the court-martial on Johnston, Kent, who was in command of the *Porpoise*, said: "He told me with extreme violence that if I knew my duty, the moment the guns were on board the *Porpoise* I should begin to batter the town

of Sydney until such time as they delivered him up the government."

As soon as Paterson had taken charge of affairs he told Bligh he must go to England, and he chartered a merchant ship, the *Admiral Gambier*, for that purpose; he proposed to send Johnston and Macarthur to London by the same vessel, so that the authorities in England might have all the actors in the revolution before them. It is interesting to reflect what would have happened if Bligh, Johnston, and Macarthur had found themselves together for four months on the same ship!

Bligh, on his part, absolutely refused to embark in such company, or in such a ship; and as he was becoming troublesome, Paterson removed him for a short time from Government House to the barracks. Terms were at last agreed upon betwixt them. Bligh was to be put on board the *Porpoise*, solemnly pledging his honour as an officer and a gentleman "to proceed to England with the utmost despatch, and neither touch at nor return to any part of this territory until he shall have received his Majesty's instructions." When placed on board the *Porpoise*, he "was not on any pretence whatever to interfere in the government of the colony." On the strength of this promise Bligh, on February 20, 1809, found himself not only on board the *Porpoise*, but in command of it, and he instantly flung his pledge as an officer and a gentleman to the winds. Kent, however, declined to turn his frigate's guns on Sydney, whereupon, as he tells in his evidence, Bligh flew into a most violent rage, and told him that "upon one day or another he would make him repent not knowing his duty"; and that was the sort of promise

which Bligh never failed to carry out. Bligh felt no shame whatever at breaking his word. "I took the *Porpoise*," he said, "upon the terms they had proposed to me, and the moment I got the command I took care to keep it, and would not suffer any of their terms, or anything which they said, to have the least influence on my mind." He persuaded himself, indeed, that to violate his solemn promise was an act of duty. "To keep such a promise," he told Lord Castlereagh, "would be contrary to all political, moral, or religious precepts." Bligh's ethics, it will be noticed, were as remarkable as his character.

Kent, for the offence of refusing to turn the guns of the *Porpoise* on Sydney, was put under arrest on his own ship, and for nearly a month the *Porpoise* lay in Port Jackson with Bligh fuming and plotting revenge on its quarter-deck. On March 12, Bligh issued a proclamation declaring the New South Wales Corps to be in a state of mutiny and rebellion, and forbidding "all masters of ships at their peril to take away any persons connected, or supposed to be connected, with the rebellion in the colony." Having discharged this blast at the entire settlement, he sailed, hanging off Port Jackson, however, for a few days, and hoping to intercept Johnston and Macarthur, who he believed were about to embark for England. Paterson, meanwhile, issued a counter-proclamation reciting Bligh's violation of his word of honour as an officer and a gentleman, and "forbidding all his Majesty's subjects to hold, countenance, or be privy to any communication" with Bligh. The Governor *de facto* and the Governor *de jure* were thus excommunicating each other. Presently the

Porpoise disappeared beyond the horizon; it was believed that Bligh had sailed for England, and Johnston, with Macarthur and such witnesses as he wished to take with him, sailed in the *Admiral Gambier* for the same destination. The fight with Bligh was to be fought on a new field. As Lord Castlereagh for more than a year had made no sign, both parties must appeal to him in person.

Bligh, however, had not the least intention of going to England. He now had a frigate, if not a colony, under his command, and he could at least make his enemies, and the ungrateful settlement which had cast him out, very uncomfortable. He sailed for Hobart, where Collins was in command, and where he hoped his authority as Governor would be recognised. He reached Hobart on March 31, and was received with due official respect, until Paterson's proclamation reached Collins, reciting Bligh's breach of faith and forbidding communication with him. Bligh called upon Collins to issue a counter-proclamation which he drew up, reciting his authority to "vanquish, apprehend, and put to death all enemies, pirates, and rebels," and denouncing both Paterson and Johnston.

Collins tried to evade the task of printing this document by the ignoble excuse that somebody had pulled the plug out of the only keg of printers' ink the settlement possessed, and the fluid had escaped. Bligh's fury, however, was not to remain inarticulate for want of ink. He required Collins to summon the inhabitants of Hobart by bell, and *read* the proclamation to them. Collins declined to do this, and for nearly six months the *Porpoise* lay in the Derwent, with Bligh and Collins

discharging proclamations at each other. Collins at last had to forbid all communications with the ship, and Bligh wrote to Lord Castlereagh, denouncing Collins' "duplicity."

The two disputants, indeed, almost came to open battle. The *Porpoise* fired on colonial boats as they passed, and compelled them to come alongside, "without any obvious reason," as poor Collins complained, "except as an insult to the settlement under my orders." He wrote to the captain of the *Porpoise*, saying that, by way of vindicating his authority, he had ordered his sentinels "to fire at every boat which may approach the settlement from your ship." The commander of the *Porpoise* showed the letter to Bligh, who addressed to him a note, declaring: "I am sure of your treating such a daring insult to the captain of a British man-of-war with the contempt it deserves." It was not Bligh's fault that the Derwent was not reddened with British blood shed by British hands.

This extraordinary state of things lasted until December 28, 1809, when Macquarie arrived from England, with instructions to assume the government of the settlement, and generally to put matters straight. He was to reinstate Bligh in his post as Governor, but only for twenty-four hours. Bligh was then to return to England, "as it appeared, from all the circumstances," Lord Castlereagh wrote, "that your remaining in the government of the colony could not be attended with satisfaction to yourself, or with advantage to the public service." Macquarie brought with him the first battalion of the 73rd Regiment, which was to take the place of the New South Wales Corps, that regiment

being ordered home, and its title changed to the 102nd. Johnston was to be sent to England in strict arrest, and put on trial for his conduct. Macarthur was to be tried by the local court.

Here, then, was a great triumph for Bligh; but there was a dead fly in the pot of his ointment. The same mail brought from Lord Castlereagh a letter rebuking him for his treatment of Wentworth, with whom Bligh had quarrelled, and had dealt with in characteristic fashion. Lord Castlereagh wrote:

"Without stating to him his offence, without stating to him the charges upon which you suspend him, you transmit his accusation hither, expecting his Majesty's ministers will form a decision in a mere case of misdemeanour, without hearing the accused person in his defence, and at the same time knowing that the accused has been kept in ignorance of his alleged crime, and prevented the means of proving his innocence. You must be sensible, from what I have thus stated, that your suspension of Mr. Wentworth on such a charge, and your concealing from him the nature of it, and your declining to bring him to trial in the colony, is not reconcilable with the principles of British justice."

Official letters are usually written in milk and water; but every sentence in this stern letter is like the stroke of a sword. Lord Castlereagh, in London, condemns Bligh for exactly those offences against justice and good government which made Johnston, in Sydney, arrest him. Bligh must have been recalled—if the "revolution" had not made a recall unnecessary.

Bligh did not reach Sydney in time to be reinstated for even twenty-four hours; Johnston and Macarthur,

it will be remembered, had already sailed for England; and Bligh reluctantly, and not until he had thoroughly disgusted Macquarie, sailed in the *Porpoise* for the same destination, reaching England on October 25, 1810.

All parties in the drama were now in England, and the battle was to be fought on a new field, before new spectators, and with new weapons. It might have been imagined that the authorities in London would deal promptly with an officer commanding a regiment who had headed a revolution, put the lawful Governor of a settlement under arrest, and set up a new Government on his own account; but this was by no means the case. Bligh was too well known; he had disgusted everybody, and there was no readiness to put the nimbus of a martyr round his bullet head. The story of the revolution had already, however, been submitted to two legal authorities in succession, and, on the bare facts submitted to them, both agreed that Johnston had been guilty of mutiny, if not treason. No other conclusion was possible to the legal mind on the facts submitted. What complexion *could* a revolution have when contemplated through legal spectacles? But still the authorities showed no eagerness to commence proceedings against Johnston. He was ordered to join his regiment when he reached England, and, in the absence of the senior officer, was actually in command of it.

Bligh, meanwhile, had carried out with characteristic malignity his scheme of vengeance on Kent, the officer commanding the *Porpoise*, who had refused to turn his guns on Sydney. The unfortunate Kent had been for thirteen months in close confinement, until his ship reached England. He was tried by court-martial at

Portsmouth in January, 1811. Kent, when Bligh came on board the *Porpoise*, and commenced issuing orders, had been perhaps the most perplexed sailor afloat, divided betwixt what he knew to be his general duty as an officer, and the extravagant demands of Bligh. But he had tried to do his duty, and in the court-martial held upon him he boldly attacked Bligh's whole conduct. The court acquitted Kent with honour, found that he was justified in the conduct he pursued, and gave him back his sword. This was a disaster to Bligh, and probably increased the reluctance of the authorities to proceed against Johnston.

It was not, indeed, until Johnston had been in England more than eighteen months, having come there for the express purpose of meeting Bligh's charges, that the court-martial which was to try him assembled. That court-martial, perhaps, never would have met but for Johnson's persistent appeals for an inquiry. He wrote to Lord Castlereagh that he was most anxious "to give proof of the high crimes and misdemeanours exhibited by Governor Bligh." He applied to the Adjutant-General for permission to remain in London in order that he might be ready to substantiate the charges he had notified he intended to prefer against Bligh. Johnston, in a word, was not on his defence; he was eager to attack his enemy. Macarthur, always an eager spirit, was of an even more warlike temper than Johnston. "Johnston," he wrote to his wife, "has created friends wherever he has been introduced. Bligh is now universally execrated. Our adversaries will be overwhelmed with the contempt and detestation they so much deserve." Here was a sanguine Scotchman indeed!

On May 7, 1811, nearly two and a half years from that fateful night in Sydney when Johnston was searching for Bligh, to arrest him, the court-martial met which was to try the case. It consisted of fifteen officers, and the personnel of the court made the issue of the trial inevitable from the outset. One-half of them were grim veterans, of whom Baird, who had stormed Seringapatam, was one; Dowdswell, who had fought under Lord Lake in India, was another; Paget, who had commanded the reserve at Corunna, was a third. It was a court of men with whom discipline was the first and last word, and the fate of a lieutenant-colonel who did, on a date named, "begin, cite, cause, and join a mutiny," was certain in advance. In the eyes of such men, what possible facts could justify a mutiny? The Judge-Advocate was Manners Sutton, who acted as legal conscience to the members of the court, and showed throughout a marked bias against Johnston.

Johnston was ill-advised by his legal representatives; he did not follow Kent's precedent, and vigorously attack Bligh's conduct. His defence rested on the single plea that the deposition of Bligh was necessary to prevent a popular outbreak and much bloodshed. But in the eyes of the soldiers, familiar with war, who formed the court, a popular outbreak was a less dreadful spectacle than that of a regiment of the King's soldiers, headed by its major, seizing the King's legal representative and deposing him.

The records of that court-martial still exist in the shape of a dingy, ill-printed volume, published in 1811, with the evidence of all the witnesses in full; and, read in the perspective of a century, it makes a bit of very

curious literature. The characters of the two chief figures, Bligh and Johnston, come out with curious vividness, and the reader to-day finds both his sympathy and his judgment irresistibly arrayed on the side of Johnston. Bligh's opening address bristles with distortion of fact, it is venomous with sly suggestions of motive. The contrast betwixt his acts and words when in power in Sydney, and his version of the same acts and words at the court-martial, is nothing short of ludicrous.

The incident which brought the trouble in Sydney to a head was, of course, the summons addressed to the six officers of the New South Wales Corps to appear before Bligh on the morning of January 26. Bligh told the court he summoned them from no other motive than "hoping to bring them to a sense of their duty." Only a paternal desire to save them from making a mistake had inspired him! His own Judge-Advocate, however, Atkins, told the court-martial that it was the ex-convict Crossley who suggested to Bligh that the members of the corps had been "guilty of treasonable practices," and should be summoned to appear on that charge before the Governor. Bligh himself wrote to Johnston to say that the whole of the six members of the Criminal Court were accused of "practices of a criminal nature."

Bligh and Johnston contradicted each other on matters of fact at a score of points. Bligh declared that the soldiers, when they moved on Government House, were drunk and out of order; that every insult was heaped upon him; that all the proceedings had what he called "a Robespierrean aspect." Johnston, on the other side, said that the troops maintained

the most steady order and the most perfect silence. "Not a man stirred from his rank except those who were ordered, nor was a word spoken on the whole line." As to the insults, the evidence showed that Governor Bligh thanked him for his courtesy. As to the "Robespierrean scenes," Johnston said: "I trust the court will not believe that my habits are so low, or my taste so depraved, that I should delight in such exhibitions; but I considered the situation truly critical and perilous, and thought it was much better to let the popular petulance exhale in that manner, than rankle in secret discontent, and break out again in unexpected violence."

Nothing in Johnston's evidence comes out more vividly than the stern and soldierly spirit of the man, his scorn of popular opinion, his respect for facts. He told the Court: "I *did* remove Captain Bligh from the government of New South Wales, and put him under an arrest. Although I am aware that such a proceeding may subject me to the highest censure and punishment, yet I feel so thoroughly conscious of the rectitude of my own intentions; so firmly and solemnly convinced that neither malice, faction, ambition, nor avarice guided my conduct; so perfectly sure that an anxious zeal for his Majesty's service, and the desire to prevent a massacre, and the plunder and ruin of an infant colony, alone determined my mode of proceeding—that I cannot, so far as a guilty intention is necessary to constitute guilt, charge myself with any crime."

Johnston was apt to talk in what we may call the Johnsonian style, and he described the spirit in which he had administered the government by saying "until his Majesty's pleasure should be known respecting my

conduct, I felt it absolutely necessary to avoid every measure which should have the appearance of conciliating favour or gaining adherents by means of expense. I believe my parsimony disobliged many, but I am sure my profusion conciliated none." His defence lay in the fact that he had to act at a moment of crisis, "far from advice, assistance, or control; amidst a population used to illegal acts, and of unrestrained habits; a population driven to phrensy by oppression, against which there was no appeal; and on the point of taking into their own hands vengeance of which it was impossible to foresee, and equally impossible not to dread, the consequence." He asked the Court "to consider the difficulty of electing a proper course under such circumstances; and if they feel the least doubt in determining on my motives, I hope and trust that my long and unblemished service of thirty-five years, and my anxious care during a great portion of the time for this very colony, will not be without their weight in the scale of consideration."

Bligh had complained that when on board the *Porpoise* he was treated as an outlaw, and the inhabitants of the town were forbidden to have intercourse with him. Johnston's short, stern reply was: "He obtained possession of his ship by permission of Colonel Paterson, on a solemn promise to return immediately to England. He was not prosecuted as an outlaw, but he proscribed the colonists as outlaws."

With characteristic courage Johnston put in as his first witness Atkins, who had been Bligh's Advocate-General and tool, and he prefaced this evidence by saying: "I declare most solemnly I do not know a

syllable of what he will prove. If he is disposed to state all he knows, he can develop better than any man the secrets and acts of Captain Bligh's government. At all events, I will put him before the Court, solemnly protesting that until this morning I have never seen, nor in any manner conversed or communicated with him respecting his evidence on this business; nor do I believe that any one of my friends has done so."

The court-martial sat for twelve days, and brought in a verdict finding Johnston guilty of mutiny, and sentenced him to be—not shot, but only—cashiered. Johnston, too, was the only victim to official propriety. The British Government decided that "the ends of justice did not require that the proceedings respecting the mutiny at Botany Bay should be carried any further." There was every probability at one moment, indeed, that a court-martial would be held on Bligh himself, but the difficulty was to decide whether its members should be naval or military officers, and so the proceedings lapsed.

Macarthur was regarded as a disquieting force, and forbidden to return to New South Wales, and for more than seven years his fierce spirit fretted his somewhat frail body almost to the point of death in England. He was offered permission to return, but it was on terms which seemed to imply an acknowledgment of wrong-doing in the business with Bligh. He vowed he would rather die than submit to any conditions which seemed to cast the smallest stain on his honour. He threatened to petition the House of Commons, "and bring forward the proofs of Bligh's peculations which have so long slept, and which I am persuaded, as indeed I always

was, would, had they been produced in Colonel Johnston's trial, have saved him, and secured to the cause, of which, poor man, he was so unfit a champion, triumph instead of defeat." He was at last allowed to return to New South Wales on his own terms.

History—or, rather, the historians—have been unjust to Johnston. In the story as told in the *Historical Records of New South Wales* there is a strong—if unconscious—bias visible against him in favour of Bligh. The charge that Bligh had corruptly interfered with justice in the law-courts, we are assured, "was not proved." But the evidence of Atkins, Bligh's Advocate-General, though marked by the timidity which was part of his nature, is sufficiently clear:

"Have you frequently been obliged, from your dread of the Governor, to submit to or sanction measures repulsive to your feelings and judgment?"—"I have, sir, sometimes thought it better, from certain reasons, to sanction measures that were contrary to my feelings and judgment."

"Did those measures relate to trials between the Crown and the subject, and to others between party and party?"—"I am rather inclined to think, sir, it was with respect to colonial regulations."

"Did you ever remonstrate with Governor Bligh on any particular occasion?"—"I did."

In this case Wentworth had been tried by court-martial, and sentenced to a penalty, which was duly inflicted. Bligh proposed to inflict a second penalty by his own authority. Says Atkins: "I stated to him that I conceived it was improper, because he had already undergone the sentence of the Court, and that I did conceive

it was contrary to law, that a man should be punished a second time. The answer that he made me was this: 'The law, sir! d—— the law: my will is the law, and woe unto the man that dares to disobey it!'"

Professor Jenks, in his *History of the Australian Colonies*, says that "the weak point of the proceedings of the revolutionary party is found in the fact that they did not send Bligh home at once. Instead of taking this course they tried, but without success, to prevent the news reaching England." But Bligh refused to leave Australia. Not only Johnston and Foveaux and Paterson, but Macquarie tried, and tried for long in vain, to persuade him to betake himself to England. And so far from it being the case that Johnston tried to prevent the news reaching England, he reported the whole story, as we have shown in a despatch to Lord Castlereagh, dated April 11.

This is a world of imperfect justice. Bligh not only went unpunished; he was promoted to the rank of rear-admiral. But Johnston, when he returned to Australia and resumed his reserved habits of life, strong in the respect of the whole settlement had no reason to envy Bligh. Amongst the crowd of ignoble figures in the whole sordid drama, that of Johnston stands stern, clear-cut, soldierly, the figure of one who dared much and suffered much for Australia, and who ought not to be forgotten by Australians. He at least showed that there was a limit to the autocratic power of the representative of the Crown; and from his time the settlement at Port Jackson was no longer a prison, ruled by the methods of a prison. It was a colony with at least the germs of freedom stirring in it.

CHAPTER IX

THE CLASH OF WHITE AND BLACK

The native races were never a serious problem in Australia. They were too few to be troublesome; too destitute, both of weapons, and of the ability to use them, to be formidable; and too hopelessly incapable of industry to be commercially valuable. The Australian blackfellow, in other words, could not, like the negro, be turned into a useful slave, and so he was not a commercial temptation to the settler; and he was not—like the Maori of New Zealand, the Indian in America, the Zulu in South Africa—of a fighting energy which made an armed force necessary for his suppression. From the point of view of the settler he was the least objectionable type of native that could be imagined. But the clash of white men and black men always raises great issues, and sometimes results in great tragedies. The most pathetic chapter in the story of the relation betwixt black and white in Australia is found in the tale of "the black war" in Tasmania. It is a true epic, complete in every detail, and moving and tragical in a very high degree. We can put a date on the exact moment when white and black for the first time met under Tasmanian skies; and we can fix the date, too, when a grave was dug for the last Tasmanian

native. The first British settlement in Tasmania dates from 1804; the last black Tasmanian native died in 1876. Scarcely more than a generation parts the two dates; and the whole drama which lies betwixt, with its passions and conflicts, its story of wrongs committed or endured, stands out sharp-cut as a cameo. Other examples can, perhaps, be found in history of an entire race, to its last member, being blotted out. But here the story is compressed within a single lifetime. It is so near to us that we are, in a sense, spectators of the whole pitiful drama, and the actors in it are men of our own blood and speech.

Tasmania is an island a little larger than Greece—about twice the size of Belgium or the Netherlands—and there is no more beautiful patch of soil on the planet. It is rich in forests, and lakes, and running streams, fair with green pastures, picturesque with wild hills and mountain fastnesses, and over it all lies a perfect climate. There is almost no mineral it does not possess, no fruit it cannot grow, no sense it does not delight, and no want it cannot satisfy. It might well be an earthly Paradise. And it is an example of the irony of history that this beautiful land is the stage on which was played a drama so pitiful.

Settlement for the white race in Tasmania, as in Australia, was made easy by the fact that the native occupants belonged to one of the simplest and most harmless types of mankind known to history. In South America, Cortez found great and civilised States opposed to him; in North America the English settlers had to face a fighting league like the Confederacy of the Seven Nations; in New Zealand, the Maori could build a pah

—a native fortress—on which a British regiment flung itself in vain. But in Tasmania the English settlers found a nomad people, with no tools and hardly any weapons; a race that had never planted a seed, nor hewn a stone, nor built a house. They had the smiling simplicity of children, lived the planless lives of children, and seemed to be as incapable as children of either agreed policy amongst themselves or sustained warfare against anybody else.

They are supposed to have numbered about 7000; though arithmetic applied to wandering clans hidden in unexplored forests is of very uncertain quality. All the early accounts show that women and children constituted an unusually large proportion of their numbers, a fact which goes to prove that they lived under conditions of almost Arcadian quietness and plenty. The first company—seen by the French in 1772—numbered forty; of these, thirty-eight were women and children.

They were plainly of a different stock from the Australian aboriginal, quicker-witted, and with brighter eyes; they had hair with a touch of negroid woolliness, and a temperament with more than a touch of negro cheerfulness. They were, on the whole, under-sized; but in the mountain tribes were sometimes found men over six feet high; and it is recorded that one old man, with his majestic head and flowing white beard, suggested to his captors the figure of Abraham. They wandered naked in the shade of the forests, men and women alike; but it was with the nakedness of childlike simplicity rather than the nakedness of want. They were a kindly people. Even in the blackest passages of the Black War

there is no recorded example of a white woman being outraged by a black man.

The face of the smiling Tasmanian, however, had not seldom lines of greater strength, and a jaw of squarer shape, than the Australian blackfellow. And war hardened this simple race. It brought out in them some formidable qualities. In the later stages of their struggle with the whites, they showed themselves to be fighters of a very dangerous type, incredibly swift in their movements, adroit in plan, sudden in onfall, patient and indomitable in resistance.

Governor Arthur, at the close of the war, and when the unhappy Tasmanians were almost at the point of extinction, wrote of them as "a simple and warlike, and, as it now appears, a noble-minded race." Those words might well be accepted as the epitaph of the Tasmanian blacks; and it is an epitaph written by the man who devised and carried out the strategy which brought their history to an end.

Tasman first saw the island that bears his name in 1642, but he came in contact with no natives. Notches carved in half a dozen trees, a curl of blue smoke on a distant hill, a sound as of a conch shell blown afar, told that the island was inhabited; but the un-enquiring Dutchman passed away, and for nearly a century and a half the Tasmanian natives were left unvisited. Then came the French. Marion visited the island in 1772. His story shows with what a simple-hearted welcome the natives received him; but the brief intercourse ended in a splutter of musketry and a red splash of blood. Some act on the part of the French offended the natives; stones were flung,

the French answered with musketry fire, and many of the natives fell. So the first actual touch of the white race and the black race on Tasmanian soil brought with it death.

In 1792 D'Entrecasteaux, and in 1802 Baudin, visited Tasmania. Peron, who was the naturalist with Admiral Baudin, gives an account of their experiences with the natives which might have been taken from the pages of *Paul and Virginia*. If we are to believe his story, the Tasmanians were simply Frenchmen with a black skin—and nothing else! They bowed, they embraced, their younger gins walked arm in arm with the French officers, they listened while the doctor of the party sang the "Marseillaise" to them, and were as much excited as though they were Parisian gamins. M. Peron draws a picture of a Tasmanian belle, a coquette without clothes, which suggests a débutante in a Parisian saloon. It is all very ridiculous; but at least it shows that the Tasmanians, when they were first discovered, were not an unfriendly race, with the morals, and the ferocity, of ourang-outangs.

The Englishman, in his turn, came on the scene, and he came to stop. Cook's second-in-command, Furneaux, touched at the island in 1773. He saw distant fires on the hills; when he landed he discovered traces of huts, but the natives were invisible. Cook himself, in 1777, visited Tasmania, and saw, and in his methodical, thorough way, studied, its dark-visaged tribes. He found their features "very far from being disagreeable," and noted, in them, with a touch of wonder, a certain proud indifference to presents. He records, too, the superior virtue of the Tasmanian women over those of

the Polynesian races. In 1798 Flinders and Bass visited Tasmania, and, like Tasman a century and a half before them, had the curious experience of unknown voices calling to them from the hills. They, however, landed, and got into touch with the natives. A couple of native women appeared, and vanished in terror; but a man came forward with an aspect of perfect confidence. He is described as "a short, slight man, of middle age, with a countenance more expressive of benignity and intelligence than of ferocity or stupidity, the general characteristics of the natives."

In 1804 came the first English settlement in Tasmania. Two French ships dropped anchor in Port Jackson, and King, the Governor, suspected them of a design to plant a settlement in Tasmania. He wrote to Lord Hobart that "a general report, due to the talk of the French officers, was circulated that M. Baudin would almost certainly fix upon a place of settlement in Van Diemen's Land." A tiny schooner, the *Cumberland*, of less than 30 tons burden, was promptly sent to anticipate the French, and hoist the British flag at every spot on which they landed, or were likely to land. The captain of the little craft, Robbins—a middy—found the French at Elephant Bay, on King's Island. He landed, hoisted the British flag, fired off what scant musketry he had, and, to the accompaniment of loud cheers from his boat's crew, announced to the staring Frenchmen that the island was British territory.

But another motive existed for planting a settlement in Tasmania. It was felt desirable to ship off to territory yet more remote and inaccessible, the most desperate characters from the convict settlement at

Port Jackson. Botany Bay, in brief, wanted a second, and sterner, "Botany Bay" of its own. Norfolk Island had hitherto held that ignoble office, and now Tasmania was selected for the same purpose. The new settlement was to consist, in a word, of the twice-convicted.

In 1803, Lieutenant Bowen of the *Glatton* arrived at the Derwent, in command of the *Porpoise*. He reports, as to the natives, "I have not made any search for them, thinking myself well off if I never see them again." Later, Collins arrived from England. He was to act as Lieutenant-Governor of the new settlement, and was also instructed to plant a colony in Port Phillip. The *Ocean*, which came under convoy of the *Calcutta* with Collins, carried 400 convicts. Bowen, in the *Lady Nelson*, meanwhile had sailed again from Sydney, and landed a party at Risdon on the Derwent.

When thus starting a settlement in Tasmania, the British Government, it can be said to its credit, did not forget the interests of the Tasmanian natives. As far as the expenditure of official ink would secure it, they were to be treated with the utmost humanity. Lord Hobart wrote to Collins: "You are to endeavour, by every means in your power, to open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their goodwill, enjoining all parties under your government to live in amity and kindness with them; and if any person shall exercise any acts of violence against them, or shall wantonly give them any interruption in the exercise of their several occupations, you are to cause such offender to be brought to punishment, according to the degree of the offence."

This clause in the instructions to Collins was repeated

in King's instructions to Bowen; it formed, indeed, a standing official regulation, fired off afresh to everybody and at every opportunity. Each Governor, in turn, repeated it in varying terms through a whole series of proclamations. Nobody issued so many proclamations against cruelty to the natives as did Governor Arthur, who planned the strategy which brought the race to an end.

But nobody enforced Lord Hobart's stern hint to punish offences against black men as severely as offences against white men. In the main, the law exhausted itself in mere exhortations. And that the offences of whites against blacks were many and shocking cannot be doubted.

As early as 1810 a Government order declared that the fact that some settlers had been killed by the natives was "due to the murders and abominable cruelties which had been practised on them by the white people." "The resentment of these poor uncultivated beings," ran another proclamation in 1813, "has justly been provoked by a barbarous and inhuman mode of proceeding towards them, namely, the robbing them of their children." Governor Macquarie, in 1814, in a public order, declared that "the first personal attacks were made"— not by the natives on the settlers, but—by the settlers on the natives; and he added, "The conduct of the natives shows that no deep-rooted prejudices exist in their minds against British subjects or white men."

The Black War, indeed, may be dated from 1819, when Governor Sorell issued a public order in very energetic accents. "It is undeniable," he says, "that

cruelties have been perpetrated on the natives repugnant to humanity and disgraceful to the British character. It would be easy to live on peaceful terms with the natives," the Governor went on to say, "if the settlers dealt with them fairly." The trouble was "to remove from the minds of the native people the impressions left by past cruelties." The sternest warnings followed as to the punishment of those who were guilty of offences towards the natives.

But though stern words were written, no stern deeds followed. Trivial punishments were inflicted in some cases. Thus a convict who had killed a native, and was using the finger of his victim as a tobacco stopper, received twenty-five lashes; a similar punishment was awarded to another convict who was found exhibiting in triumph a pair of human ears which he had cut off the head of a native boy.

It ought to have been clear to everybody from the outset that no energy of official proclamations could arrest the mischiefs sure to follow from the policy of turning loose a swarm of criminals from English prisons, and a procession of the most desperate convicts from Port Jackson, amongst a simple-minded race — the majority of which consisted of women and children. It was almost like emptying the inhabitants of a gaol upon a Sunday-school, or an orphan asylum. The race was doomed by the policy of the very despatch in which Lord Hobart exhorted everybody to live in amity and kindness with its members. The official purpose was humane; but to land the twice-convicted on such a stage, and amongst such a people, was to ensure a tragedy.

The party brought by the *Lady Nelson* from Sydney formed a camp at Risdon, about five miles from Hobart, and the first meeting with the natives was significant. A solitary black, spear in hand, walked into their camp and stood with unsurprised face looking round. When he had satisfied his wordless curiosity, he turned back to the forest. Some of the British followed him, but he wheeled round with poised spear in an attitude of warning. That fearless, solitary figure, with uplifted and threatening spear, was expressive. It was a prophecy of the relations of the two races.

On May 3, 1804, the camp at Risdon had its baptism of blood. Bowen, the commander, was absent; the officer in charge, it was whispered, was drunk. Suddenly there appeared on the hill looking down on the little camp a number of blacks. Many women and children were with them. They came in a curved line down the slope, driving some kangaroos before them. They had no spears, only waddies, and were plainly engaged in a hunt. The little party of soldiers, however, was hurriedly thrown into line, and the order to fire was given. The official report at the time gave the number of killed as only "one or two." But investigation, later, showed that the killed and wounded were not less than fifty, and included many women and children. That volley of musketry fired in 1804 profoundly influenced all the after-relations betwixt the two races, and the famous drive of 1830 was but the culmination of the history thus tragically begun.

It is easy to trace the pitiful, inevitable story which followed. At first there was an interval of peace. The number of convicts was small, the oversight reasonably

strict, and no attempt was made to push out at large over the island. Parties of the natives would wander into the settlement, with the smiling curiosity of children, and presently wander away again and disappear. There were many thefts, of course. The natives were practical communists, socialists before the word "socialism" was invented. They knew no "rights of property" amongst themselves, and naturally had no sense of the sacredness of property belonging to anybody else. But the officials of the settlement, and the few free settlers already on the ground, treated the natives with rough kindness. The farmers would sometimes let their boys go hunting with them, or even leave their children in their care. So late as 1824, the little newspaper at Hobart declares that, "taken collectively, the sable natives of this colony are the most peaceful creatures in the world."

But a change came in the relation betwixt the races, a change tragical and cruel, but inevitable; as inevitable as the explosion of powder when a fire-stick is thrust into it. The convicts were a community of males—criminals with the appetites of beasts, and something of the unreasoning and unconscious cruelty of beasts. The native women tempted their lust, and the theft, or the ill-usage, of gins grew common. The offenders were in quarrel with the law already, and in the Tasmanian bush they found themselves beyond its reach. What was there to restrain them? The stealing of native children, too, by the settlers themselves, became common. They could be made useful. So wrongs multiplied, and the races drew apart. Then the blacks began to retaliate. The whites stole their gins and their children, and they avenged themselves by stealing cattle.

In 1806 the supplies of food from Port Jackson failed, as the result of a shrunken harvest there, and the convicts were encouraged to disperse themselves throughout the island in search of kangaroos. These animals were amazingly abundant: their skins had a commercial value, their flesh was nourishing food, and its price rose to 1*s.* 6*d.* per pound. Their abundance, and the scale of the profits derived from them, may be judged by the fact that in 1831, from a single district only—that of Bothwell—100,000 skins were sent to Hobart. The prisoners, set free from restraint, and turned into hunters, were in this way thrown into direct contact with the natives, and the little native camps were helpless before them.

Many of the convicts, again, turned bushrangers, and, being thus in open feud with their own race, were not likely to be humane in their treatment of another race. The stories of the cruelties they practised make shocking reading. Gins were stolen, and chained up like wild animals. When the aggrieved native attempted to recover his wife he was shot down promptly. One bushranger killed a blackfellow and seized his gin: then, cutting off the dead man's head, fastened it round the wife's neck, and drove the weeping victim to his den. Another bushranger, when under sentence of death, confessed that he had been in the habit of shooting the natives "to feed his dogs." It was probably an idle boast; but it was a revelation of the spirit of his class.

A hundred stories of this character might be told, but they represent the cruelty of individuals, not of the Government; a cruelty born of stupidity, of want of

imagination, of an undeveloped or a non-existent conscience; the cruelty of men already brutalised by crime, and cast out as a menace to their own race. And cruelty in such natures easily becomes a passion. To torture another, or to kill, flattered the torturer or the murderer. It was a sign of mastery.

Let it be remembered that it was a very hard age. Humanity, in the modern sense—the sensibility that cannot bear to inflict pain, or even to look at it—was not yet born. Life was cheap, suffering was a trifle. At a single sitting of the court at Hobart, thirty-seven men were sentenced to be hanged. Who reads the story of how men were flogged—flogged till the white shoulder-blades showed under the torn flesh—will realise what an interval parts the social temper of the twentieth from that of the early nineteenth century. And men who had inflicted such pain, or had suffered it, were not likely to be very tender in their concern for the sufferings of others.

For the Spaniards in South America, cruelty was a deliberate policy. It was even more: it was a religion. It seriously mistook itself for piety. But in Tasmania it was an accident. It was forbidden by law and in conflict with declared public policy. It was nothing better than a form of crime; crime which had its seed in a white race, breaking into dreadful flower at the cost of a black race. And all history shows that crime, in white or black, is essentially and eternally cruel.

Cruelty, of course, awakens cruel echoes. Revenge may come slow-footed, but it comes surely.

> "For evil word shall evil word be said;
> For murder-stroke a murder-stroke be paid;
> Who smites, must smart."

The natives began to burn and kill, in natural and inevitable retaliation. And revenge, which has always in it an element of blindness, does not discriminate. A man of the white race had stolen a gin, or carried off a child, or shot down some members of the tribe, and the blacks avenged themselves on any other member of the hated race they met.

But the balance of wrongdoing still remained with the whites. The blacks avenged themselves in units, they were slain in crowds. Roused to fury by the spectacle of a burning house, or of some neighbour's body with gaping spear-wounds, the settlers would organise a party, ride off in pursuit, and slay by scores. A company of whites would surround a black camp, and shoot down the natives that sat round the fires—men, women, and children. Bonwick tells the story of how a party of military and constables, in 1827, drove a band of natives betwixt two perpendicular rocks, and killed seventy of them, dragging the women and children from the crevices of the rocks, and dashing out their brains. The story, it may be added, rests on tradition, and tradition always exaggerates.

Dr. Lang, in a letter to Earl Durham, says: "A spot was pointed out to me, a few years ago in the interior of the island, where seventeen natives had been shot in cold blood. They had been bathing, in the heat of a summer's day, in the deep pool of a river, in a sequestered and romantic glen, when they were suddenly surprised by a party of armed colonists, who had secured the passes, and I believe not one of them was left to tell the tale. . . ."

This is the sort of story evolved by gossip, and resting

on nothing better than the evidence of gossip. But there must have been some ugly facts to set the gossip going. Incidents of a very cruel complexion were, it may be repeated, inevitable under the conditions which prevailed. And it is to be added that the condition of the natives was made more hopeless by their geography. They had not, like the Australian natives, the wide spaces of a continent into which they could flee. They were shut up in what was practically a closed chamber, a little island with the imprisoning sea all about it.

CHAPTER X

THE GREAT DRIVE

So at last there came a bitter, universal, and constant race-war in Tasmania; and the natives proved unexpectedly formidable. They were furtive, swift-footed, as difficult to seize, or to slay, as so many shadows. They broke out from the concealment of their forests with fire-stick and spear, slew a household, lit the darkness with the flames of half a dozen burning houses, and then vanished again. They knew every hiding-place in the island, every forest-track, every river-ford; and the speed with which they travelled, the rapidity and suddenness with which they broke out to kill, and disappeared beyond reach of pursuit, filled the whites with terror. The blacks learned cruelty from the whites, and in some cases bettered their instructors. But still their ravages were marked by the absence of one dreadful form of crime; they would kill white women, but there is no recorded case of outrage committed on them.

The tale of the cruelties they committed is lit up, indeed, by odd flashes of humanity. Thus, a party from what was known as the Big River tribe fell upon the household of a settler named Clarke. The house was burnt, its owner perished in the flames. But his wife, escaping with her clothes on fire, ran into the crowd of natives, and fell upon her knees, imploring their pity.

No man struck her. One of the blacks, with rough compassion, beat out her flaming dress, and bade her begone.

No pages in West's *History of Tasmania* are more dreadful than those in which he gives, in exact and catalogue form, a list of the whites slain or wounded by the natives betwixt January 1, 1830, and October 3, 1831. Almost every day had its crime, every month its long list of outrages. The number rose to hundreds. In one district alone, Oatlands, 121 outrages by the blacks were recorded within six years. In Oatlands itself 21 inquests upon persons murdered by the natives were held betwixt 1827–1830.

The blacks had their leaders—now, for the most part, nameless and forgotten; but two picturesque figures are still visible on their side. One was an Australian black called Mosquito, transported from Sydney to Hobart for the murder of a woman. For some time he was employed by the police as a guide in tracking bushrangers, and rendered invaluable service, for he had the keenness of vision and the expertness, in all the arts of savage warfare, of an Indian warrior. He was promised restoration to his own country as a reward for his services, but the promise was forgotten. Mosquito committed some trivial offence, was taken into custody, broke from his prison, escaped to the bush, joined what was called the Oyster Bay tribe, and by sheer energy of character and force of daring made himself their chief. The knowledge he had gained during his residence with the whites made him a formidable leader, and for long he kept a whole district in terror. He taught the Tasmanians new lessons in cruelty, and trained them to a subtle and cat-like form

of warfare which the settlers found very disquieting. He was captured at last, brought, half dead with wounds, to Hobart, and hanged.

A native woman—Walloa, of the Sorell tribe—a sort of dusky Boadicea, obtained a bad pre-eminence in the outrages of the period. She had suffered much cruelty at the hands of some brutal whites, and at the head of a party of natives she spread panic through whole districts, and committed many murders.

Some of the scenes of that dreadful time may still thrill the heart with pity. In a little valley not far from Jericho the natives slew a whole family, husband and wife and seven children. In another glen a farmer started out to his day's work, leaving behind him his wife, who had recently been delivered of twins. Happening to glance back, he saw the door of his little cottage being shut, and shut, he thought, with suspicious quickness. Stung with some sudden dread, he ran home—to find wife and children dead, gashed with a dozen spear wounds. Murder had stolen in through that quickly shut door, and in that one brief moment!

One crime which struck the colony with horror was the massacre of a family named Gough. The natives made a feint of attacking a cottage at a little distance from Gough's house, and thus drew the settler to the assistance of his neighbour: then they made their leap upon his household. Gough heard the shrieks from his little cottage, and, turning back, met his daughter flying, white-faced in terror, with the news that his wife and the rest of the family had been killed. Gough found his wife leaning against a fence, the blood running from a score of wounds. "My dear," she said,

"it is all over; the blacks have killed me." The children were found dying or dead.

An attack was made upon the house of another settler at Swanport. The family barred the doors and windows, and held the blacks off by a steady fire, while one man crept in the darkness through the natives and ran at full speed to give the alarm at the nearest military post, Pittwater, fifty miles distant. When he reached the town of Sorell his hair had turned literally grey with terror and fatigue.

Traditions still survive of the sieges by the blacks of solitary houses, and the way in which they were sometimes beaten off by the courage of women and children. Thus, a half-caste woman named Briggs, who had married a white settler and become the mother of his children, was in her hut, a little slab dwelling, its bark roof — fortunately for her — plastered with lime and earth to keep out the rain. She heard a noise outside, and sent one of her two little girls out to see what it was. There came a piercing shriek; the woman ran to the door, musket in hand. The child was struggling back into the house with a spear driven clean through her thigh. The huge, transverse weapon caught in the doorway, the blacks were running swiftly up, and the mother had to drag the spear from the wound before her child could enter. Then the doors and windows were hurriedly barricaded, and with a single musket this brave woman, defending her tiny brood, kept the blacks at bay. They tried to pull down the chimney, built of sods; but the flash of the woman's musket was deadly. They then tried to set fire to the house by throwing flaming brands on the roof; but the besieged

woman poked them off with a long stick until, after a struggle of many hours, help came.

Again and again, in the surprises and assaults of this strange warfare, some sturdy mother, standing in defence of her children, showed, in this fashion, the highest form of courage. The blacks attacked a lonely hut in which, at the moment, was a woman within a few days of her confinement, and a little child, four years old, her only companion. The woman had two muskets, and the little four-year-old girl brought one to her mother as soon as she had fired off the other, and so the defence of the house was maintained for hours, till help came. Another story tells how a settler had gone out in search of sheep. Returning about ten o'clock in the morning, he found some twenty natives crouched in a cluster of wattle-trees, close to his house, his wife standing at the door, pistol in hand, keeping them at bay. He ran past the blacks, escaping their spears, and reached the house. Doors and windows were barred, and with difficulty one attack after another was repelled. A little girl, at last, crawled like a lizard through the grass, followed by her mother's weeping eyes, and, escaping even the keen senses of the blacks, reached a party of sawyers working in the forest, and brought assistance.

It fell to Governor Arthur to bring the cruel and wasting strife betwixt the two races to an end—an end in itself sufficiently tragical. Arthur was one of the ablest of all the men who have represented the Crown in Australasia. He had won distinction as a soldier, having served against the French in Italy, in Egypt, and in the unhappy expedition to Walcheren. His

special faculty for affairs caught the attention of someone in power, and he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of British Honduras, where it fell to him to suppress a serious rising of the slaves. In 1823 he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania, and held that office till 1837. His after-career is sufficient proof of his great ability. He was Lieutenant-Governor of Canada at a very anxious period; then became Governor of Bombay, and took part in great events with Lord Ellenborough and Sir Charles Napier, and was finally appointed provisional Governor-General. A man who, by sheer force of merit, rose so high, and held with distinction such great posts, must have been a man of exceptional powers. Probably no other man in the British Empire was better fitted to deal with the perplexities of affairs in Tasmania than Arthur. He had a hard side to his nature, a side reflected in the famous prison settlement which bore his name; and yet he was essentially humane.

Now a capable soldier and administrator of this type, who had fought against the French in Sicily and in Egypt, who had put down a slave-rising in the West Indies, and who was afterwards to assist both in the conquest and the government of India, ought to have been able to bring to swift and easy close a struggle with a few hundred natives, armed with spears and waddies, in the scrubs and forests of Tasmania. But Arthur found the task almost too much for even his energy.

The first plan tried was that of confining the natives to special geographical areas out of which they must not pass, and into which the whites were forbidden to enter.

But it was difficult to get the natives into the districts assigned to them; it was yet more difficult to keep them there. The task was like attempting to keep, by paper regulations, a flock of shy and wild birds within a prescribed section of the atmosphere. The blacks were nomads by force of ancient habit; the wandering impulse was in their blood.

Moreover, the distribution of territory was unfair to them. The centre of the island—and all the fertile country south of it from Ben Lomond, with its rivers rich in fish, its plains, the ancient hunting-grounds of the tribes—was forbidden to them. They were restricted to the gloomy forests of the south-west, or the rain-whipped coastal ranges of the north-east.

Human nature proved too strong for official regulations. The little wandering clans were deaf to Governor Arthur's threats and proclamations; they heard the call of their familiar hunting-grounds, and betook themselves to them, and, exasperated by a sense of wrong, they slew white men and women as well as kangaroos. The attempt to keep the races geographically separate hopelessly failed.

Another plan, which broke down even more promptly and disastrously, was that of capturing the natives individually, and confining them by force in certain localities. In 1828 the settled districts were placed under martial law, and a number of capture-parties were organised and despatched to "bring in" the natives. There were nine of such parties, consisting of seven persons each, and a reward was offered of £5 for each adult native and £2 for each native child captured. It was rough work, and was done roughly.

Some of these capture parties had humane leaders, the most notable amongst them being Batman, who won fame, later, as the founder of the colony of Victoria. Batman was an ideal bushman, quick-eyed, daring, of commanding stature and great energy, a true leader of men; and he was as humane as he was fearless.

But even if all the capture-parties had been under leaders like Batman, the experiment must have failed. The blacks were as swift and as shy—not to say as fierce—as wild animals. The official capture-parties, moreover, were assisted by amateur commandoes of a still rougher type—little bands of stock-keepers and settlers, who started out to earn the bounty given for the capture of a black. They found the objects of their pursuit hard to get and hard to hold. It was easier to shoot them at night, as they shivered round their camp-fires, than to outrun and seize them in the daylight. Very many more were killed than were captured. A single report, "five killed and one taken," says West, represents the average of all the reports. If two were taken, ten were shot. The natives did not understand that these capture-parties were a humane expedient, undertaken in their interests, and meant to bring them into more sheltered districts, where they could dwell unharmed. They simply knew they were being hunted and shot at, and they slew and burned in reply, when they had the chance, even more fiercely than ever.

At this stage, the chief trouble was to get into pacific touch with the natives. They were invisible, except when they suddenly emerged out of invisibility for purposes of murder. For the settler they were a dread,

a vague, formless terror, a terror that crept soft-footed through the forest, and broke out without warning, and slew without pity. Arthur offered generous rewards to anyone who should succeed in opening pacific communications with the natives. In the case of a convict the reward was nothing less than a free pardon; but even such offers won no effective response.

One ominous change was noted in the condition of the natives about this time. They had become an almost childless race. Dogs had taken the place once filled by children in their travelling bands. To hunted aboriginals, making forced marches of extraordinary length, and at amazing speed, in order to escape destruction, or to inflict it, children became a burden. If hardship did not kill them, the blacks themselves not seldom, and as a settled and a dreadful policy, destroyed them. In the hush and secrecy of their swift, soft-footed marches, a crying child might well be a peril; so, as a precaution, it was killed. But a childless race is doomed.

In 1830 Arthur undertook the famous "drive"—the climax of the Black War, and the most costly, picturesque, and absurd incident in the relations of the two races. There was a levy *en masse* of whites; every settler was called upon to place himself under the direction of the nearest magistrate. Military, police, and private citizens were to join in one supreme effort to put an end to the long campaign of murders and outrages betwixt black and white. Ticket-of-leave men and convict servants were to join with the free settlers in the effort. An unbroken chain of posts was to be drawn clean across the island, from the east coast

to the west. It was to advance steadily, the parties keeping touch with each other—within actual sound of each other's voices—through forest, scrub, and marsh, across river and mountain, and so chase the natives to Tasman's Peninsula. That wild and savage point, thrust out like a spear-head into the sea, would be a secure prison. Only its narrow "neck" would need to be guarded.

One chain of posts stretched from St. Patrick's Head to Campbelltown; a second ran from Campbelltown, passing south of the Macquarie at its junction with the Lake River. The two divisions formed a living thread stretching from Oyster Bay to Lackey's Mills, and steadily swinging southward. Another chain was intended to drive the natives from the western lakes to the east of the Jordan; still another line in the north stretched from Norfolk Plains to the Ouse, from Sorell Lake to Lake Echo.

The total force employed — military, constables, settlers, &c. — numbered not less than 5000, 1500 being contributed by Hobart and 500 by Launceston. At the central depot at Oatlands, 1000 muskets were provided, 30,000 rounds of cartridges, and—300 pairs of handcuffs! The commissariat arrangements were sufficient for a campaign against a French army. The care for the men engaged in this odd service extended to their devotions, and forms of prayer were printed for those who would use them.

It was reckoned that as the line moved onward, and its front narrowed, it would become so compact as to be impenetrable, but in the rear was a chain of lightly equipped parties, intended to pick up any blacks

who did break through. Hill-fires directed the march of the line; and the fires stretched, in tiny points of flame, across the whole island. The campaign was expected to last five weeks, and to sweep the natives finally off the landscape.

The nature of the country to be crossed, however, and the weather which fell upon them, sorely tried the endurance of this army of amateur soldiers. It rained incessantly, the rivers were swollen and bridgeless, the marshes became lakes. In some parts—notably in the district round Deloraine, and about what is called the Three Thumbs Mountain—the country is as difficult as a section of the Engadine. And even where no hills of Alpine ruggedness made the march difficult, yet forcing a way through the tangled Tasmanian scrub was, for dampness, like wading through a river; while as a peril to flesh and clothes, it was like struggling across a Sahara of barbed wire.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRAGEDY OF A PERISHED RACE

Operations began on October 7. Two tribes, the Oyster Bay and the Big River tribes, were specially marked out for pursuit. They were to be driven on to the rugged, lance-like projection of Tasman's Peninsula, and held there. The far-stretching human line splashed and struggled on day after day, whipped with driving rain, footsore with clambering over rocks, ragged with forcing its way through square miles of prickly scrub; and probably not even the British army in Flanders could emulate the energy with which it swore. When the movement had been in progress over a week, a party of blacks was discovered sleeping round their fires. Two were shot; two, a man and a boy, were seized; and these proved absolutely the sole results of this tremendous effort! The entire community had been called to arms, the island had been swept as with a small-tooth comb, over £30,000 had been expended; and the net result was the capture of a man and a boy. A net so vast, and cast out with so wide a fling, caught only a couple of sprats.

The line, however, still pushed on. As it approached the Peninsula, it touched Sorell on the one flank and the sea on the other, making a human chain thirty miles long. The neck of the Peninsula was at last reached;

when it was entered it was found empty! The blacks, as silent and as intangible as shadows, had flitted through the line. And while that long front of tired and bedraggled men was floundering and splashing its way towards Tasman's Peninsula, the escaped natives reported themselves, in dreadful characters, in its rear. The flames of burning houses, and news of fresh murders, told that the blacks were busy at their evil work again.

The great drive at least proved that the natives who succeeded in filling the whole island with terror were of incredible fewness. Months afterwards, Robinson—the "Conciliator," as he was called—succeeded in capturing the Big River "tribe," or, rather, its remnants. He found it to consist of sixteen men, nine women, and one child. "This," says Bonwick, "showed that £30,000 had been spent, and the whole population of the colony placed under arms, in contention with an opposing force of sixteen men with wooden spears." That is picturesque, but not exactly true. The Big River tribe was only one of the native clans aimed at; and it had shrunk, or been scattered, in the interval betwixt the drive and the moment of surrender to Robinson. But it is certain that the alarmed imagination of the colony, in its estimate of the numbers of the natives, forgot all sober arithmetic. The facts proved afresh, if proof were necessary, how sharply a few wasps could sting.

It is one of the ironies of history that it was in the very year in which Lord Stanley introduced in the House of Commons his Bill for the emancipation of slaves, that Governor Arthur was stretching his famous line of settlers and soldiers across Tasmania, to sweep all the

surviving natives out of their hunting-grounds into captivity. The passage of that Bill, Emerson says, "marked the entrance of a man to the human family." Governor Arthur's action at the same moment marked the exit of a race from the population of the globe.

When muskets and handcuffs and the great drive had, in this way, failed, moral forces achieved success; and the most interesting, if not the most picturesque, chapter in the whole story is that which comes *after* the great drive. A bricklayer in Hobart Town, named Robinson, a plain man, almost uneducated, of no social position, and with no shining gifts of intellect, undertook to accomplish what the entire military strength of the colony had failed to do—and he did it!

Robinson was a Methodist, a deeply religious man, and he had learnt, what statesmen and philosophers too often forget, the power that lies deep-hidden in moral forces. His religion had lit in him a flame of pity for the native race, and common sense taught his pity to be practical. He had secured the charge of a few natives at Bruni Island, and with that plain sense which is sometimes wiser than genius, he had set himself to master the language of the natives, and to understand their habits and character, as a preliminary to winning their confidence. He submitted to Governor Arthur a plan for bringing in all the hostile natives by the simple force of persuasion; persuasion that did not argue with muskets, but with unaffected human kindness.

Robinson's proposal at first only aroused laughter, and he had to wait his time. He was no dreamer, and had too much common sense to be a fanatic. He was healthy-minded, strong-bodied, with keen, courageous

eyes, open countenance, and firm lips; a middle-sized man, hardy, strong, enduring. He was admirably adapted for a business which would tax human strength and fortitude to the utmost degree. Late in life Robinson described the reasons which moved him. "I considered," he said, "that the natives of Van Diemen's Land were rational; and although they might, in their savage notions, oppose violent measures for their subjugation, yet if I could but get them to listen to reason, and persuade them that the Europeans wished only to better their condition, they might become civilised, and rendered useful members of society, instead of the bloodthirsty, ferocious beings they were represented to be. This was the principle upon which I formed my plan."

Governor Arthur had wit enough to discern the fine qualities of Robinson himself, and statesmanship sufficient to adopt his proposal. At the moderate salary of £100 he was commissioned to begin his task of reaching, winning, and bringing under civilised control, the surviving natives of the island.

Robinson had gathered round himself at Bruni Island a little group of natives, had won their hearts with his kindness, and had mastered their language by diligent study. He selected a few assistants out of their number, and set out on his apparently quixotic enterprise. He had first to reach the blacks in their secret hiding-places; and the hardship and toil of this alone would have been too much for anyone of less heroic temper than Robinson. When he had reached each little party of hidden natives, he had to face their spears, to win their confidence, to persuade them to surrender. Again and again his life was in peril. More than once he escaped only by flight.

Not the least perilous moment of his career was when he won his way at last to the stronghold of the Big River tribe, a hidden glen under a grim cone, the Frenchman's Cap, which rises 5000 feet in air above a wilderness of scrub. The tribe, when Robinson at last succeeded in reaching it, consisted of sixteen men and a few women, each man a scarred warrior, armed with triple spears and a waddy, their chief, a giant in stature, grasping a spear eighteen feet long. Probably every spear in those grim hands had been reddened with the blood of a white victim.

The first impulse of the blacks was one of hate. Every man lifted his spear and poised it at Robinson, who, with his son and a couple of his followers, stood beside him.

"I think we shall soon be in the resurrection," whispered McGeary, one of Robinson's assistants, to his chief.

"I think we shall," was Robinson's rejoinder.

"Where are your guns?" asked the black chief.

"We have none," was Robinson's reply.

"Where your piccanini?" was the next question, meaning by that the pistols.

The reply again was, "We have none."

Here was a white man who puzzled the staring blacks, and there was a bewildered pause. One of Robinson's native followers found the situation too trying, and fled; but Robinson began talking to the blacks, who listened in wonder to a white man who could speak their language. Meanwhile, two of the native women who were members of Robinson's party had stolen round to the little group of old, travel-worn

women who crouched behind the armed natives. The women were chattering together. Presently the women of the hostile group threw up their hands quickly, and thrice in succession. It was the sign of peace.

All that day and some days succeeding, Robinson stayed with this savage fragment of one of the great tribes of the island, till at last he won them and brought them in—not handcuffed as prisoners, but walking by his side as friends—to Hobart. Robinson records that every member of the group—men, women, and children—had dreadful scars, all tokens of shot-wounds.

At Arthur River, in the bleak north-west, where a band of blacks had taken refuge, Robinson had a still more trying experience. He had reached the band and camped with them, trying to win their confidence. The natives resolved on his destruction. At daybreak a great fire was built, and the blacks drew together in hostile aspect. Robinson walked quietly up to them, and stood in front of them with his arms folded. If they were not willing to go with him, he said, they could return to their own country. The band raised a fierce war-cry, and flung themselves in a ring about Robinson, each man with lifted spear. Robinson's calmness was his security. He stood so quietly that the threatening spears seemed to be arrested, and, after a pause, the spear-points fell and Robinson quietly walked out of the ring.

After a brief and noisy consultation the natives started in pursuit. The river was deep and swift, and Robinson could not swim, but, clinging to a branch of a tree, and helped by a native woman, he succeeded in getting across, and escaped. Telling the tale after-

wards, Robinson said: "In all my difficulties, my sole dependence was on the Omnipotent Being. Frequently have I seen the sun go down without any expectation of beholding it again in the morning; and I have been surrounded by savage blacks, with their spears presented at me, and have been spared when all hope had fled."

In this way, with incredible toil, matchless courage, and zeal that never grew slack, Robinson—"the Conciliator," to give him the title by which he is still remembered—gathered in the fragments of the broken tribes. By 1835 the last wandering group was brought in, and the forests and hills and plains of Tasmania were cleared of the blacks. The last party consisted of four women, a man, three boys, and—thirty dogs.

But when the natives, in this way, had been brought in, the problem remained of what to do with them; and, to put it briefly, the authorities in Tasmania never quite succeeded in solving that problem. They were first lodged on Swan Island, a little patch of barren soil, with brackish water, off Cape Portland. Here they died fast. They were next transferred to Gun-carriage Island, north of Cape Barren, a miserable islet on which the surf breaks with tremendous fury. The island had no game, it was scourged with bitter winds; and, as Bonwick tells the story, "the unfortunate blacks used to sit, day after day, on the beach, casting tearful glances across the stormy sea towards the mountains of their native land." They were children of the forest, of the lake, and the river, and they were set in conditions which would have made sea-birds discontented. They died fast, and died of what was nothing less than home-sickness.

Next they were removed, in shrunken numbers, to Flinders Island. Here, indeed, were trees and kangaroos, but all the winds blowing through the Straits beat upon it, and the native settlement was on the south-western side, on which rain and sleet fell incessantly. The unfortunate natives suffered from rheumatism and consumption. They were in contact, too, with whites of a low type, and these proved more deadly than any disease to the unfortunate natives. In a short time half the little cottages put up for the natives were empty, their tenants were in the grave. The last survivors of the race were perishing; and "it is clear," says West, in his *History of Tasmania*, "that many perished by that strange disease so often fatal to the soldiers and peasants of Switzerland who died in foreign lands from regret of their native country."

These unfortunate blacks were within sight of Tasmania, and as they beheld its blue and forbidden shore, they were seized with the deepest melancholy. The doctor in charge of the settlement put the same idea in medical terms: "They died from a disease of the stomach, which comes on entirely from a desire to return to their own country." They were dying of grief, in a word—from mere lack of interest in life; from melancholy and the physical results of melancholy. Their complete extinction was in sight. In 1869 the last man, William Lanney, died. The sole survivor was a woman, Truganina, or Lalla Rookh. She died in May 1876, her age being supposed to be seventy-three.

The tale, of course, is old; and when oppressing whites or oppressed blacks are a generation distant, they are no more to us than uncomfortable dreams.

These dark-skinned savages, it will be said, resembled the animalculæ which wriggle and bite, multiply and die, in a drop of putrid water. They have no value or significance in the scale of life. But this particular race stands close to ourselves, both in time and in geography, and the responsibility for its destruction lies on the men of our own speech and blood.

We are accustomed to say that there is some fatal and ineradicable quarrel betwixt the white races and the black; they cannot dwell within the same geographical area; the black must vanish when the white appears. This is one of those easy generalisations that work untold mischief. We need a new Emerson to teach us that the varying tints of human complexion do not cancel the common fact of humanity. Who has the soul and intelligence of a man has the talisman. "His skin and bones, though they were the colour of night, are transparent, and the everlasting stars shine through."

No doubt, in the long tragedy of human affairs, Fate has again and again said to one race or another: "Creep into your grave; the Universe has no use for you." But it was not "Fate" which dismissed the unhappy Tasmanian race out of existence. It was human stupidity, stupidity which flung the failures of one race—no doubt the superior race—on the simplicity and ignorance of an inferior race. It was the clash betwixt a community made up of criminals, without adequate restraint, and a handful of tribes which had the simplicity and the undefended helplessness of children.

BOOK III

TALES OF THE EARLY EXPLORERS

CHAPTER I

THE SIEGE OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

The most remarkable feature in the story of early settlement in Australia is the fact that, for more than a quarter of a century, that settlement was limited to an area of barren land some eighty miles by forty; or, say, a radius of forty miles from Sydney.

And yet the first settlement in Australia was begun on a great scale and with very spacious ideas. It was not a lonely and adventurous ship, but a whole fleet—consisting of three men-of-war, three store-ships, and six transports—which brought Phillip's company to the Australian coast. Phillip himself was a seaman of Cook's type, with a touch of Cook's genius for exploration: and if he brought with him 757 convicts, for whom the new settlement was to be a prison, he also brought 200 soldiers and officers, and a personal staff of a fine quality, for whom it was an adventure, and an opportunity. The tiny colony was rich in some, at least, of its personal elements; and it was set in conditions which might well have kindled a flame of enterprise in duller minds than those gathered about Phillip.

The new settlers had an exhilarating climate, with skies above them more radiant than their native land ever knew. Their ships were riding in the sheltered

waters of one of the most magnificent harbours in the world, discovered almost by chance. A continent —vast, mysterious, unknown—was calling to them. What wonders might not be hidden in this *terra incognita!* They were like children who stood on the threshold of some vast and untenanted building, with all its chambers open and its treasures unguessed. In whatever direction they chose to walk they were treading where the foot of a white man had never passed before.

The dull, untaught imagination of the very convicts was curiously stirred by the sense of the unknown country lying around them on every side. One officer tells how they found the convicts "particularly happy in fertility of invention and exaggerated descriptions. Large fresh-water rivers, valuable ores, and quarries of marble, chalk, and limestone, were daily proclaimed soon after we landed." Everybody who wandered from the settlement started out with expectant eyes, and returned with wonderful stories.

They had dreams, in particular, of a white race, to be found some 300 or 400 miles distant in the interior; an Arcadia where policemen were unknown, and a cat-o'-nine-tails was never used. A plot to reach this beckoning fairyland was formed at a very early date, and a paper, with written instructions, and the figure of a compass giving the direction, drawn roughly upon it, was passed from hand to hand. Phillip took an odd step to put an end to this particular illusion. He announced that the convicts should pick four men—the strongest and most hardy of their number—and under three experienced guides they should be sent to discover this Arcadia—or, rather, to prove that it did

not exist. He found, however, that the convicts promptly adjusted their plot to his plans. The tiny exploration party was to be waylaid, the guides murdered, their weapons seized, and the rejoicing convicts would then march on their way to Arcadia, untroubled by any official oversight. Four soldiers were, therefore, added to the party for its protection.

This curious expedition started, the soldiers escorted the chosen group "to the foot of the mountains"—or as near as they could get—and returned, bringing three of the party, whose hearts had failed, with them. A fortnight later the remainder of the party—ragged, footsore, starved—crept back to the settlement. They had discovered no Arcadia, and the first assault on the Blue Mountains had failed.

When this dream of a white Arcadia—with no law-courts—had faded, an obstinate conviction that China might be easily reached by a journey across the Australian plains took possession of the convict imagination, and one group after another broke loose and started on the wild adventure.

It is still interesting to read of the visions of what might lie beyond the horizon which haunted the imagination of those first settlers. Flinders, perhaps the greatest of all names in the early history of Australia, dreamed of sailing up an estuary, or some vast waterway, and discovering fertile, inhabited lands in central Australia. Flinders probably borrowed this idea from Dampier, who thought that the inlet opening north of Shark's Bay was the mouth of some vast river, or a strait leading to "an inland sea where a superior country, and perhaps a different race of people," might

be found. This inland sea was a phantom which long haunted the minds of the early settlers. A more gloomy imagination was that the whole interior of the continent consisted of "an ocean of sand."

All these, it is true, were dreams; but they were dreams which might well have quickened the blood of the first settlers, and made them scorn to cling, for more than twenty-five loitering years, to a tiny patch of sterile soil on the mere edge of the continent. And yet the fact remains that from 1788 to 1813—for a quarter of a century, that is, after Phillip's fleet dropped anchor in Port Jackson—the country forty miles from Sydney was practically unknown.

The business of sea-exploration, of course, went on busily. Bass and Flinders are the two heroic figures in that field. The story of each ends in a tragedy, but their fame deserves to be immortal. The sea never witnessed finer daring, or a more stubborn hardihood, than they showed. It is no exaggeration to say that they had a dash of genius beyond Cook. Cook, with his sober, reasoned, methodical courage, would never have sailed in the *Tom Thumb*—a dinghy eight feet long—to explore the coast—scourged by the great Pacific seas—like that which stretches north and south of Sydney Heads. Or, if he had done it once, he would never have repeated the experiment.

But in their little *Tom Thumb*, with only a boy for crew, Flinders and Bass sailed—or paddled—their way to Botany Bay, and explored the river flowing into it. In a second cruise they were swept to the south beyond Wollongong, and discovered Providential Cove and Port Hacking. And what sea-story is more wonderful

than the tale of how, in a whale-boat, Bass explored 600 miles of stormy coast, and discovered the straits which still bear his name? The adventurous seamen of that day were constantly adding to the knowledge of the coast-line of Australia. In 1802 Lieutenant Murray, in the *Lady Nelson*, discovered Port Phillip. Three times, indeed, in that year, and independently, Port Phillip was "discovered"—by Murray, by Baudin, the French navigator, and by Flinders; while, in addition, Flinders had explored Spencer Gulf.

Harbours, rivers, headlands in this way were being mapped along the whole line of the Australian coast. But still the settlement of New South Wales, with a limitless and fertile continent waiting to be explored, had remained buttoned up within the area of a parish —and a small and lean parish at that. The settlement, indeed, was in imminent danger of perishing from mere starvation. The thin soil, even with the help of the scanty farms on the Hawkesbury, could not grow sufficient food for the settlers. The whole hunger-pricked community was put on rations, and the rations sometimes shrank to vanishing point. The very existence of the settlement hung on the arrival of transports with supplies from the Cape or from England. On one memorable occasion, as has been told, Phillip himself solemnly poured his private stock of flour—some 300 pounds in weight—into the public stores, to show that he shared the hardships of the general community. The food-supply of the settlement had to be guarded with relentless severity, and in May 1789 no less than six marines were hanged in a single batch for the crime of stealing food.

How did it come to pass that while sea-exploration was carried on with such daring and success, exploration by land was arrested? Why did that first community, pricked by want, challenged by wonder, yet contrive to remain for a quarter of a century without breaking through more than forty miles from the borders of Port Jackson? The answer is found in the Blue Mountains.

On April 15, 1788—three months after the fleet had dropped anchor in Botany Bay—Phillip, with Captain Hunter of the *Sirius*, and a couple of boats, was creeping up the Hawkesbury. They reached what is now known as Richmond Hill. A turn of the river suddenly revealed a long stretch of frowning hills, blue in haze at their summit, but black with scrub along their base, and scored with gloomy ravines. Phillip's gaze was caught by the ribbon of azure colour on the crest of the range, and he almost involuntarily named the line of low peaks "the Blue Mountains."

They did not seem very formidable. It was no wall of Alpine or Himalayan peaks, white with untrodden snows, their flanks steel-clad with glaciers, on which he gazed. Measured scientifically afterwards, no summit rose to an altitude exceeding 3500 feet. Australia, indeed, *has* no mountains, in any large sense of the word. It resembles a pancake. If it *had* a central mountain-range, from whose flanks started great rivers, running seawards, and fed by eternal snows, how the continent would be transfigured! Australia would equal the two Americas in natural wealth. Our climate, our industries, our natural habits, our very politics would be changed. As a matter of fact, the highest peak in the

continent—Mount Kosciusko—has a miserable altitude of only 7308 feet; and the Blue Mountains do not reach half that height.

It seemed, viewed from a distance, as if any pedestrian might saunter at leisure over that range of blue-tipped hills. But beneath that streak of azure, lying low on the horizon, was a tangle of heart-breaking cliffs and impassable valleys, of vast perpendicular rifts, of river-beds rock-choked—mere traps to the explorer—such as, for difficulty of transit, can hardly be paralleled elsewhere on the surface of the globe. Hannibal and Napoleon in turn led an army, with all its equipment and baggage, across the Alps. But if the great Carthaginian had tried to lead his many-tinted legions, say, up the valley of the Grose; or if the great Corsican had set his war-hardened battalions clambering through the defile by which the Cox breaks through to the Hawkesbury, their armies would have fared worse than they did in the stern passes of the Alps. The Alps and the Apennines, tumbled together, indeed, would hardly form a more hopeless barrier than that hidden in the innocent-looking curve of blue hills on which Phillip looked. That band of azure swept round till it seemed to touch the sea-coast north and south, and form a girdle of colour round the new settlement. But beneath that curve of blue lay hid a chain of iron.

The story of the many attempts made to break through the Blue Mountains is long, picturesque, and, in a sense, amusing. In 1789 an officer—Lieutenant Dawes—was despatched with a party on an expedition to "reach the foot of the range"; but he only succeeded in approaching within eleven miles of it, and returned,

ragged, footsore, and defeated, from the tangle of scrub and rocks.

Tench, in June of the same year, made a dash for the Blue Mountains from Rose Hill, where he was in command, but he only succeeded in reaching and discovering the Nepean. Later in the same year, Tench and Dawes joined forces, and started again on the same route, but accomplished nothing more than proving that the Nepean was a tributary of the Hawkesbury. Captain Paterson, with a well-equipped party, carrying provisions for six weeks, started from the Hawkesbury in the same year, in an attempt to cross the range. Paterson had won some fame as an African traveller; but he now found himself struggling through wilder ranges than Africa knew. He penetrated ten miles beyond the point previously reached, discovered the Grose, and then fell back in despair.

In April 1791, Phillip himself, accompanied by Captain Tench and Lieutenant Dawes, made an attempt to follow the banks of the Hawkesbury to the ranges. But he found the incessant tributary creeks too deep to be waded where they entered the river, and the country in which they sprang too rocky to be crossed.

In 1794 an enterprising seaman named Hacking, quartermaster of the *Sirius*, with a party, almost succeeded in reaching the foot of the range, but returned, reporting they "saw nothing before them but savage and inaccessible hills." Ranges rose, tier after tier, above them, pierced by chasms narrow, profound, and, as it seemed, impassable. By this time, indeed, the colonists had begun to believe that a passage across the Blue

Mountains was hopeless, and attempts to penetrate their savage gorges were for a while suspended.

In 1805 Cayley made a notable assault on the strangling hills. He was accompanied by "four of the strongest men in the colony, who had been accustomed to living in the woods." They started from the junction of the Grose with the Hawkesbury, keeping to the north side of that river. After what is described as "incredible fatigue," Cayley reached Mount Banks, now known as Mount King George. It took him no less than twelve days to reach that point. "The roughness of the country," Cayley himself writes, "I found beyond description. It was like travelling over the tops of houses in a town." Governor King reported that "the result of Cayley's expedition was to prove that persevering in crossing these mountains, which are a confused and barren assemblage of mountains, with impassable chasms between, would be as chimerical as useless." "The ranges," says Governor King, with a disgust which proves too much for his grammar, "wear the most barren and forbidding aspect which men, animals, birds, and vegetation has ever been strangers to." Two solitary crows were observed by Cayley, flying over these desolate hills, and he records: "It was supposed they had lost their way, or they never would have been seen in such quarters."

Cayley piled a rude heap of stones at the point where he turned back, and "Cayley's Repulse" was afterwards a well-known landmark in the hills. Dr. Lang, in his *History*, tells how he stood beside it, and looked over the landscape. "Nothing was visible in any direction," he says, "but immense masses of weather-beaten sand-

stone rocks, towering over each other in all the sublimity of desolation. A deep chasm . . . seemed to present an insurmountable barrier to all further progress." As a matter of fact, this cairn of stones could not have been piled by Cayley, as the route he pursued ran to the north of it. The pile represented the point of defeat of some unknown explorer.

Bass, the most enterprising and daring of men, felt that line of unpierced blue on the horizon to be a challenge, and he resolved to repeat on land some of the feats of exploration he had achieved on the sea. He attacked the Blue Mountains, but had the ill-luck to choose the valley of the Grose as his line of advance, a choice that made failure certain.

He selected some daring comrades, had his feet, according to the report, "armed with iron hooks, that he might scale the cliffs after the manner of a spider," and made his comrades lower him down the face of the wildest ravines. But he returned, after fifteen days, assuring the settlement that "a passage over the Blue Mountains did not exist."

The most elaborate and romantic attempt to cross the Blue Mountains at this period was made by Barrallier. He was a Frenchman by birth, but held an ensign's commission in a British infantry regiment, and had been appointed by Governor King as military engineer. He was a man of ability and of scientific training, and on his return to England was employed in many public tasks, the most notable of which was the erection of the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square. It is a touch of the satire of history to know that it was a Frenchman who erected the stately monument on

which stands the figure of the great seaman who won Trafalgar.

Barrallier's assault on the Blue Mountains was prefaced by an official jest. His superior officer, Colonel Paterson, refused him leave of absence for the purposes of the expedition; whereupon Governor King invented an imaginary "king of the mountains," and claimed Barrallier's services as his aide-de-camp, for purposes of an embassy to this non-existent monarch. Barrallier's party consisted of five convicts and four soldiers. He started from the Nepean, establishing depots as he went. On his return he wrote a report in French, and in characters so villainous that Governor King did not even attempt its translation. "I have not had time," he said, "to decipher and read it, but I am satisfied, from what Mr. Barrallier has done and seen, that passing these barriers, if at all practicable, is of no great moment to attempt any further at present." Governor King's English, it is to be observed, is generally of a somewhat distressing quality.

Barrallier's report is published in full in the *Historical Records of New South Wales*, vol. v. "These mountains," he says, "are generally accessible up to a certain height, but they then are perpendicular, and their summit forms a kind of leaden wall. More generally they overhang in the form of vaults, in the interior of which one sees enormous rocks overhanging, and quite ready to fall down at the slightest move." Barrallier describes himself as climbing precipices "where immense overhanging rocks, which seemed to be attached to nothing, offered an appalling scene. Enormous masses, on which we tried to hold ourselves, in order

to be able to pass, offered so little resistance that the slightest effort detached them. I continued to advance in that dangerous situation," he says, "for half an hour, using my hands and feet, which were bleeding, but I was literally stopped by a barrier of rocks which projected outwards in the form of vaults." "All the mountains," he reports in another place, "were like so many pyramids at the side of one another. If one were climbed it was only to descend it and climb another."

Barrallier claimed that he reached a point which—if his chart is correct—placed him very near the source of the Lachlan River, and proves that he actually crossed the Blue Mountains. King, however, says of Barrallier: "He has talents, but I fear not much sincerity"; a judgment which seems to throw doubt on the credibility of the imaginative Frenchman's report. It is certain that popular opinion declined to believe that Barrallier had really achieved the feat of crossing the Blue Mountains; in any case, it was clear that he had discovered no route suitable for traffic.

What, then, was this strange tangle of chasms and gorges—of cliffs that could not be climbed, and river-beds that could not be followed, and valleys which led nowhere—which for a quarter of a century arrested all progress from Sydney? To-day they form the most delightful pleasure-ground on the continent; the joy and wonder of all tourists. But that they offered a most formidable barrier to early settlement is beyond doubt. Darwin, in his famous voyage in the *Beagle*, visited these ranges, and his description of them is vivid. He tells how he stood "on the brink of a vast precipice; below, one sees a grand bay or gulf, for I know

not what other name to give it, thickly covered with a forest. If we imagine a winding harbour, with its deep water, surrounded by cliff-like shores, to be laid dry, and a forest to spring up on its shelly bottom, we shall then have the structure and appearance here exhibited." "These valleys," he says again, after a visit to Govett's Leap, "are most remarkable. Great arm-like bays expand at the upper ends of their branches to the main valleys, and penetrate the sandstone platform. On the other hand, the sandstone often sends promontories into the valleys, and often leaves in them great, almost insulated valleys. To descend into some of these valleys it is necessary to go round twenty miles. . . . Although several miles wide at their head, they generally contract towards their mouths to such a degree as to become impassable."

"It is not easy to conceive," he writes, "a more magnificent spectacle than is presented to a person walking on the summit-plains, when without any notice he arrives at the brink of one of these cliffs, which are so perpendicular that he can strike with a stone (as I have tried) the trees growing at a depth of between 1000 and 1500 feet below him; on both hands he sees headland beyond headland of the receding line of cliff, and on the opposite side of the valley, often at the distance of several miles, he beholds another line rising up to the same height with that on which he stands, and formed of the same horizontal strata of pale sandstone." He describes Govett's Leap as "a tremendous rent or depression in the earth which is said to be the deepest chasm with perpendicular cliffs in the known world."

Sir Thomas Mitchell says: "The mouths of these stupendous ravines are extremely narrow. Mr. Dixon, in an unsuccessful attempt to reach Mount Hay, penetrated to the valley of the Grose, and when he at length emerged from the ravines in which he had been bewildered for three days, he thanked God—to use his own expression in an official letter—that he had found his way out of them." Mitchell himself tells how he "endeavoured in vain, first walking, then by crawling between the great fragments of sandstone, to ascend the gorge through which the river Grose joins the Nepean." Yet the valley of the Grose in its upper part is a magnificent level basin, miles in width, walled in by vast cliffs.

What is the explanation, in geological terms, of the remarkable belt which for so long confined settlement to a tiny patch round Port Jackson? Curran, in his *Geology of Sydney and the Blue Mountains*, gives an interesting and scientific study of its structure.

It is the surviving fragment, he thinks, of some pre-Silurian continent, sister fragments being found as far north as the McDonnell Ranges, in York Peninsula, and far south in Tasmania. It was once a sea-bed, and was then lifted up by some vast earth-movement. It sank again beneath the sea, was once more lifted up, and formed a vast plateau of Hawkesbury sandstone. Then the plateau on its coastal side sank, and the sea flowed over it. The valley of the Hawkesbury and Port Jackson, on this theory, are simply systems of mountain gorges into which the sea has, in this way, broken. But while one half the basin was depressed, the other half was elevated. To-day, the eastern

portion lies deep under the Pacific; the western part survives, in the shape of the Blue Mountains.

"The abrupt eastern margin of the Blue Mountains," says Curran, "up which the great western railway zigzag ascends, marks the line of a 'fault,' by which all the country between it and the coast was thrown down to its present level." This is the ridge known as the Darling Causeway, which for a distance of about thirty miles forms the watershed between the tributaries of Cox's River and of the Grose River.

This does not, however, explain those narrow and perpendicular valleys, of depths so vast, which are the chief feature of the Blue Mountains, and can scarcely be paralleled elsewhere on the face of the globe. What has sculptured and carved that great platform of rock into such a tangle of chasms? Curran holds the agencies to have been, not the wilder forces of Nature —volcanic fires or rending earthquakes—but simply, as in most mountain valleys, patient, soft-lapsing water. He bids us regard these sudden and tremendous ravines as the product of the subtlest of natural forces. They are nothing more than examples of water erosion. To others a more plausible theory is that these ravines began as fissures—stupendous cracks—produced in the structure of the great rock-table by mere strain, when the eastern side of the vast basin broke off and sank.

It is interesting to read Darwin's discussion of this question when he visited Australia during the famous voyage of the *Beagle*. He, of course, was not a geologist pure and simple, but he had the sure eye of a matchless observer, and, added to it, a gleam of luminous and

scientific imagination; and imagination of this type is not seldom as trustworthy as direct vision.

Darwin says that "to attribute these vast chasms to the present alluvial action would be preposterous." How could such enormous masses of triturated matter have been excavated, forming abrupt and tremendous valleys on the scale of those found in the Blue Mountains and then be swept through the narrow gorges which form the throat of these valleys? The neck, Darwin argued, was in every case too small for the bottle. So he rejects what may be called the water theory, on the single but sufficient ground that the exits from the valleys are totally inadequate. Sir Thomas Mitchell, it will be remembered, took the same ground as Darwin. "The outlets of these tremendous valleys," he says, "are extremely narrow: what can have become of the matter so scooped out?"

Darwin, on the same ground, rejects the bay theory —the supposition that these valleys are a vast, many-branched harbour, from which the sea has been withdrawn. The outlets of the valley are too narrow, he again argues, to make that theory credible. But, with his matchless power of remembering and co-ordinating apparently unrelated facts, Darwin finds the key to the structure of the Blue Mountains in the vast submarine sand-banks he had seen in the seas of the West Indies, banks formed of sediment piled by strong currents on an irregular bottom, and so taking eccentric shapes; but always with steeply sloping banks. We have only to imagine such a line of mud-banks lifted out of the sea-depths, and left to the action of sun and winds and rain, to get a suggestion of what

may be the origin of this strange belt of gorges and chasms.

It is, of course, a digression, but it is amusing to notice Darwin's forecast of the future of Australia. He saw Australia, it must be remembered, in 1834, coming to it from South America; and at first he was swept away with admiration. He grows, indeed, almost lyrical in praise of what he saw. The contrast betwixt the energy of British colonisation and the drowsiness of settlements Spanish in their origin amazed him. The Sydney of 1834 he declared to be "the most magnificent testimony to the power of the British nation. Here, in a less promising country, scores of years have done many times more than an equal number of centuries have effected in South America. My first feeling was to congratulate myself that I was born an Englishman."

But a study of the general Australian landscape quickly chilled Darwin's admiration. He surrenders the idea that Australia will rise to be as grand and powerful a country as North America. "Its two main exports," he says, "are wool and whale oil"; and he reflects that "to both these productions there is a limit." The country, he further decides, "is totally unfit for canals [the ordinary method of transport in those days], therefore there is a not very distant point beyond which the land carriage of wool will not repay the expense of shearing and tending sheep." "So far as I can see, Australia must ultimately depend upon being the centre of commerce for the southern hemisphere, and perhaps on her future manufactories. Possessing coal, she always has the moving power at hand."

Darwin could not foresee that within the lifetime of a single human being, from the moment he wrote those words, Australia would possess 14,000 miles of railway; that when its flocks had grown to 84,000,000—double all the flocks in the United Kingdom—the demand for their wool would still exceed the supply; or that lines of swift and stately steamships would be carrying to the hungry markets of the world a score of Australian products outside his dreams.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE WAY WAS FOUND

In the light of after-events we can see that some of those early, and defeated, attempts to cross the Blue Mountains which have been described, came nearer success than the explorers themselves knew. Dawes, for example, when, late in 1789, he started on his trip, crossed the Nepean at the old Emu ford, and travelled on a line running from Prospect Hill towards Round Hill—his ultimate objective. His bolt was shot when, on December 14, he reached a peak which he named Mount Twiss, almost certainly the elevation known to-day as Valley Heights or Springwood. This makes it clear that he must have crossed the very route, running westward, which Blaxland afterwards followed. Had he but possessed a gleam of Blaxland's shrewd judgment—or a touch of his good luck—he might have swung round to the west, followed the watershed betwixt the Grose and the Cox, and anticipated Blaxland's success by a quarter of a century. Mount Hay was first ascended by Mr. Govett in 1835, but Dawes, nearly forty years earlier, came within eleven miles of that peak. Cayley, again, at Mount King George, the point where, in 1805, he turned back, was almost on the edge of the Vale of Clwydd, only fifteen miles, in an air-line, from the historic spot at which Blaxland's party turned

back to carry to Sydney the tidings that the Blue Mountains had been crossed.

To Gregory Blaxland belongs the fame of having first pierced the Blue Mountains. He was a Kentish man, who arrived in the colony in 1806. His statue, as it stands in the Lands Office, Sydney, shows an upright figure, with flint-lock musket carelessly grounded. The body, perhaps, is too slender for the square head, with its wide brows; but the open eyes, the long, straight nose, the firm mouth, are all signs of intelligence and courage. Blaxland was a stock-breeder, and naturally longed for wider fields and richer pastures than he found on the restricted plains, with their thin soil, betwixt the mountains and the sea. And, as it happened, the settlement had reached a point in its history at which it became clear that it must either widen its bounds or emigrate. If a track across the Blue Mountains could not be discovered, then the multiplying stock round Sydney must be transhipped by sea to new pastures. It is true, the census taken by Macquarie in 1810 gives the population as only 11,590, with 12,442 cattle, 25,888 sheep, 1134 horses, and 7615 acres of tillage land. These figures seem petty, and *are* petty. The Sydney of that day was practically only a small country town, and the whole settlement had less stock than is to-day carried by many a third-rate "run." But small as was its live stock, it was too great for the pasture lands available. A drought, too, had wasted the scanty grass on the lean soil, and the whole settlement was in a critical condition.

Under these circumstances, Blaxland set his mind steadfastly to the task of finding a way through that

blue ridge of imprisoning hills to the wide and rich landscapes he believed to lie beyond them. He brought intelligence to bear on the problem. He owed one-half of his success, in fact, to a reasoned plan, and the other half to pure good luck.

He guessed that the true pathway across the hills did not lie along the river valleys. It might seem, indeed, that where water ran the feet of men might travel with the greatest ease. The river beds are examples of Nature's own engineering, and the real key to the conquest of the hills might reasonably be expected to be hidden in them. So the great chasm by which the Grose breaks into the Hawkesbury was accepted as the most obvious gateway to the Blue Mountains, and nearly every previous explorer had attempted it by that route. And yet that valley was nothing better than a trap. It beguiled the explorer into a maze of tumbled rocks and frowning cliffs, where strength and courage were vain.

Blaxland abandoned the methods of earlier explorers. He conceived the idea that if he chose one of the lateral spurs of the Blue Mountains, and kept on its ridge—crossing the head of each stream which ran down its northern or southern flank—he would escape those vast rifts which had defeated all his predecessors, and find a road which led to the summit of the huge and tangled plateau. His idea was sound. His good luck consisted in the fact that he chose the ridge which, stretching eastward from the range, forms the watershed betwixt the Grose and the Warragamba or Cox rivers.

This is the very route followed later by the original Bathurst road; the present railway varies only slightly

from it, and no better line of road across the hills has even yet been discovered. Mitchell, a few years later, conceived the idea of carrying the western road along the valley of the Grose, and cutting a tunnel a mile long through the rampart-like cliff at the end of it to the Vale of Clwydd—a plan which shows that the engineers of those days did not lack daring. He tried himself to penetrate the valley of the Grose, in order to explore this route, but found it impossible to either climb or crawl through it. In later years a grant of land was offered by the Government to anyone who would point out a better line across the hills than that Blaxland took; but that prize was never claimed.

Blaxland tells the story of his expedition in a neat little booklet, published in London in 1823, and dedicated to his uncle. The party consisted of Blaxland himself; Wentworth, who afterwards played a leading part in Australian politics, and Lieutenant Lawson of the 104th. They had four servants, four horses laden with provisions, and five dogs. They crossed the Nepean to Emu Island on the afternoon of May 11, 1813, and camped at the foot of the first ridge. The distances travelled throughout the trip were calculated by time, the rate being estimated at about two miles an hour. Their one fixed rule was to cross all the streams that ran to right or left of them at their sources; in this way they would be certain of keeping on the ridge of the watershed. The first day they travelled only three and a quarter miles, forcing their way through thick scrub, the ridge to which they clung twisting sharply in every direction, with deep, rocky gullies running down on either side. The second day they came across a line

of axe-marked trees, plainly the signature of some previous explorer. When they had advanced two miles they found their way barred by a vast stretch of what seemed impenetrable brushwood. They tried to creep round its flanks, but these ended at mere precipices. The next morning, axe in hand, Blaxland and his party fell on the brushwood, and hewed a narrow track into its very heart, and succeeded in advancing nearly five miles, the gullies on either flank being deeper and more rugged than ever. Wentworth describes them as "really terrific, being nearly perpendicular for several hundred feet." On the fifth day they fought their way two miles further, and on the following day, Sunday, they rested. But Blaxland reports that this pause "gave the men leisure to ruminate on their danger, and there was some doubt on Monday as to whether they could be persuaded to venture further."

It is difficult, at this point of time, to imagine what "danger" could be apprehended. There were no wild animals, and no hint or sign of any natives. We get, however, an amusing view of the Blue Mountains, as seen through French eyes, in the narrative of M. Peron, who belonged to one of Baudin's ships at that moment at anchor in Port Jackson. M. Peron discovered in the aboriginal mind — or invented for it — some lunatic dreams as to what was hidden in the wild gorges of the Blue Mountains, or lay in the unknown country beyond them. He tells us that, "according to aboriginal tradition," behind that blue curtain hanging low on the horizon there was a vast lake, a sort of Caspian Sea, on the banks of which dwelt "inhabitants fair as the English, dressed like the English, and, like them, build-

ing stone houses and large towns." But in the dark ravines of the Blue Mountains themselves, according to the blacks, dwelt an evil spirit—or even whole battalions of spirits—and from the summit of these insurmountable rocks "this terrible god hurls his thunder and sends forth the burning winds and sweeping floods which lay waste the country."

Now the "native mind" is not given to inventing myths of this sort; it has hardly enough imagination, even with the help of an indigestible diet, to evolve the most humble ghost. And this picture of a maleficent deity perched, say, on Mount Hay, and scorching the plains along the sea-coast with "brickfielders," must be regarded as having its birth in French, rather than in aboriginal, imagination. But superstition of this kind may have chilled the courage of Blaxland's convict servants.

On Monday, the 17th, however, the attack on the brushwood was renewed, and, axe in hand, the little band chopped their way for six miles and a half, the ridge twisting in the maddest fashion. They camped at sunset between two very deep gullies, and had to fetch water up the side of a precipice about 600 feet high. The next day they cut a track through the scrub for a mile and a half, and came back to their camp tired and almost defeated. "The ridge," says Blaxland, "which was not more than fifteen or twenty yards over, with deep precipices on each side, was rendered almost impassable by a perpendicular mass of rock nearly thirty feet high, extending across the whole breadth." There was, however, a small and broken gap in the centre—a mere crevice or gimlet-like hole—

and by removing a few large stones the crevice was enlarged, and the party crept through. On Wednesday they were still hewing their way through the scrub, but found they were ascending the second ridge of the mountains.

Here they struck a cairn of stones, evidently the work of some earlier explorer. They guessed it to be the one erected by Bass, and, says Wentworth, "nothing could have afforded stronger proof of the indefatigable perseverance of the man in surmounting these almost insurmountable barriers." He came to this point, if indeed it *was* his cairn, from a different direction than Blaxland's party; and that mere fact proves—what, indeed, other evidence makes clear—that the pile of stones could not have been erected by Bass. A later guess makes it Cayley's memorial, but it is practically certain that this guess, too, was wrong. Cayley's route never approached the point on which Blaxland's party now stood. The only surviving theory is that the cairn was erected by Hacking in 1794, nearly twenty years before Blaxland and his party stared at it with astonished eyes.

On Saturday, the 22nd, Blaxland and his comrades reached the summit of the third and highest ridge of mountains, and from the bearing of Prospect Hill, and of Grose Head—both landmarks being in clear sight—they computed this spot to be, in an air-line, eighteen miles from the Nepean River at the point at which they crossed it. With the sweat and toil of so many days they had struggled through a distance of only eighteen miles!

The tale of their fight with the scrub from day to

day is practically the same, but on the 28th they found themselves on the edge of a precipice whence they looked down on a wide valley, apparently covered with good grass. The trouble was to get down to it. The descent was deep, the slope was steep and slippery; but by cutting with a hoe a small trench, which ran on an angle athwart the face of the immense slope, they got their horses down, and found themselves in what is now known as the Vale of Clwydd. They pushed on through a pass in the rock down yet another sharp descent, and on the 29th, at nine o'clock in the morning, they reached the foot of what is now known as Mount York. They travelled for two miles across meadow land, "through grass," as Blaxland rejoicingly notes, "from two to three feet high," till they came to the bank of a fine stream which they named the Rivulet, now called the River Let. On Sunday they rested; on Monday they pushed on westward for about six miles through forest land, and on the afternoon of May 31 Blaxland himself climbed a sugar-loaf hill, from the top of which—like another Moses from an Australian Pisgah—he gazed on such a stretch of pastoral country as no settler yet had ever seen. That hill to-day bears Blaxland's name, and was the extreme point of the journey westward. The party had travelled only fifty miles across the mountains, and eight miles through the open forest beyond them, but they had spent twenty days in the process. Those few toilsome days, however, were memorable in the history of Australia. They opened the gate of the continent to the handful of settlers on the shores of Port Jackson.

It was, however, perplexing to find that the River

Let, reached after such toil, ran not west, but east. That raised the question of whether they had really crossed the watershed of the ranges. The wide landscape stretching to the horizon said "Yes"; that eastward-running water at their feet whispered "No." As a matter of fact, the stream was a tributary of the Cox, and its running waters, as Blaxland and his comrades stared at them, were on their way to the Hawkesbury. Blaxland, it is thus clear, had not, even yet, crossed the actual watershed of the Blue Mountains; a low, serrated ridge lying to the west was the true dividing line, which a later explorer was to cross. But that first tiny group of explorers had achieved all that was necessary. They had found a practicable track across the tangle of tremendous cliffs and rock-choked gorges which for so long had defeated all attacks.

Macquarie was, of all the early Governors—except perhaps Phillip—best qualified to understand the importance of Blaxland's feat, and to turn it to practical use. He was a soldier, and had served in America and in India, taking part in both the sieges of Seringapatam. He had played an active part, too, in the campaign of 1800 in Egypt. He thus had a soldier's faculty for swift decision; he was, in addition, of a restless spirit, with a passion for building, and a genius for road-making—perhaps the most useful of all impulses for a man in such a post as he held. As a detail, he had a mania for linking his name to every building erected, and every discovery made, during his term of office. He held the post of Governor for only twelve years, but during that period he erected some 200 barracks, hospitals, gaols, &c., in New South Wales, and about

fifty in Van Diemen's Land. Nearly every one of his 250 buildings, it may be added, bore on its front the name of Lachlan Macquarie. The whole Australian landscape, indeed, as known to him, is scribbled over with his signature.

But, in spite of his vanity and his erratic genius, Macquarie had exactly the gifts which enabled him to turn Blaxland's discovery to its highest use. On November 20, 1813, Mr. George Evans, the Deputy-Surveyor of the colony, was despatched, with a party of five, to verify Blaxland's story by following in his track, and examining the unknown country on which Blaxland had looked. He began at Blaxland's starting-point on the Nepean; the narrow, thread-like track which he had cut through the scrub was easily discovered, and followed, and on November 26 Evans had reached Blaxland's furthest point. Every step beyond was into absolutely unknown country. By Tuesday, November 30, Evans had gained the ridge which lay, a faint line of blue, on the horizon, the true watershed betwixt the eastward and the westward flowing streams.

He climbed to a point in the range, and gazed westward. There lay at his feet a landscape of rolling downs, rich with grass and sprinkled with trees, giving the whole scene a park-like effect. "I think," wrote Evans, "I can see forty miles which has the look of open country." But beyond the curving horizon lay an unknown continent. If Evans had possessed a gleam of the poet's vision, he might have seen all Australia, with its measureless possibilities of wealth—towns and cities, orchards and wheatfields and mines, flocks and

herds beyond count. And he was the first white man to look upon the scene.

Evans pushed on still further through scenery which enchanted him, "the handsomest," he wrote, "I have yet seen, with gently rising hills and dells well watered," till he struck a river rich in fish, and from which he drew what he calls a "trout," the first Murray cod tasted by a white man. He named the stream the Fish River, and followed its windings through magnificent country till December 7, when another stream fell into it which he named the Campbell. To the combined stream he gave the name it still bears, the Macquarie. He followed its broad current through a rich, level landscape, to-day known as the Bathurst plains, till he had reached 98½ miles, measured by the chain, from Blaxland's furthest point. Then he turned back, carrying to the settlement his news of wide pastures and running streams. He reached Sydney on January 8, 1814, his whole trip only taking seven weeks.

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT ROAD AND WHAT LAY BEYOND

The news he brought was a challenge to Macquarie's passion for road-making, and he promptly undertook the task of constructing a road across the Blue Mountains along the line by which Blaxland and his comrades had hewn their way, axe in hand; a road of a quality which the greatest road-builders known to history—the Romans—might not have been ashamed to own. When Darwin afterwards rode along this road, it moved his astonishment. "Its design, and its manner of execution," he wrote, "are worthy of any line of road in England." Macquarie was happy in his choice of the person whom he put in charge of the task —Cox, an ex-officer of the N.S.W. Corps, an engineer, as the work itself proves, of skill and courage.

Cox has left a diary of his experiences in building this road, and it is an historical document of real interest. He volunteered to attempt the task purely as an act of public duty. In the words of Governor Macquarie, he "voluntarily relinquished the comforts of his own house and the society of his numerous family, and exposed himself to much personal fatigue, with only such temporary covering as a bark hut could afford against the inclemency of the weather"; and he did all this, not to make money, but to serve the State.

His staff, to start with, consisted of thirty artificers and labourers, with a guard of eight soldiers. But Cox had a remarkable gift for getting the best work out of his scanty staff. The road was to be at least 12 feet wide, with the timber cleared away for 20 feet. Cox's journal shows its writer's genius as a labour-captain. He makes little of difficulties, and is full of generous appreciation of the spirit and diligence of his men. The speed at which the work was done seems, in these easier days, almost incredible. Thus Cox tells how, in three weeks, and with the labour of only twelve men, he constructed a road 400 feet long, and a bridge, at one of the most difficult points of the track: and for part of the way the road was cut in the solid rock.

For his bridges, Cox had to use the timber he found growing; and he tells how, for the side piece of one of these bridges, he used a tree 55 feet long and 9 feet in circumference: as a side piece for another bridge he used an oak tree 50 feet long and 10 feet in circumference, &c. His instructions were to follow the track mapped out by Evans; but again and again it was found to be impossible to make a road on the course thus laid down. Then Cox would scatter his men down all the gullies near, and offer a reward to anyone who discovered a better course. He records that at one point "the descent is so steep that it is with much difficulty a person can get down at all. The whole front of the mountain is covered with loose rocks, and on the right and left it is bounded by steep gullies and rocks." Here he was content to make "such a road as a cart could go down empty, or with

a very light load. It would answer to drive stock down, but no cart could climb up it with any sort o load whatever." The original road, it is clear, was not always of a character to be described as a "permanent" way. A track had to be improvised, and made "permanent" afterwards, and this was done with the sustained toil of years, and with an unsparing expenditure of labour.

Cox found abundant ingenuity amongst his workers. Thus he records that "W. Appledon, a sailor, fixed the block and tackle to trees, and got a most capital purchase to turn out an immense large rock on the side of the mountain in the way of our road, which he performed well." Only once did the courage of his men—or of some of them—seem to fail. Cox writes: "After dinner gave all hands a gill of spirits—then gave them a reproof in earnest, which I expect will make them all well by to-morrow." At one part of the road, as laid down by Evans, it was found impracticable, at first, to make a road, even for a horse; but Cox triumphed over even that obstinate ravine. Macquarie himself, describing that part of the road which descends into what is called the Prince Regent's Glen, says "the ascent was a nearly perpendicular precipice, 676 feet high, as ascertained by measurement. The road constructed by Mr. Cox down this rocky and tremendous descent, through all its windings, is no less than three-quarters of a mile in length, and has been executed with skill and stability."

The road was exactly 101½ miles in length, from the starting-point at Emu Ford on the River Nepean, to the flag-staff at Bathurst. It was begun on July 7,

1814, and finished on January 14, 1815. It was constructed, that is, in six months; and it may be doubted whether there is on record any other bit of work so difficult accomplished by so small a party in so brief a time.

The great road continued to have labour expended upon it for years afterwards, and expended, it may be added, in more liberal measure than Cox had at his command. The settlement was rich in convict labour, which, if not highly efficient, was at least cheap. In the ten years betwixt 1810-20, 16,943 male convicts arrived in Sydney—11,250 of these came after 1816—and Macquarie had difficulty in keeping this huge mass of strong and hardy, if sullen, workers usefully employed.

The present writer, wandering on the old Bathurst road some years ago, and recalling the story of its making, noted one amusing proof of the wealth of labour at the disposal of the Government, and the almost absurd thoroughness with which such work was done. At one point the road crosses a ravine; where the ravine is deepest, the track is sustained by a wall at least seventy feet high, and the whole of that wall is faced with axe-dressed stone, finished with a care which is almost worthy of the front of a city bank.

Cox was a fine type of the men who wrote the first page of Australian history. In the graveyard of St. Matthew's, overlooking the Hawkesbury, stands his monument. It recites that he "Departed this life on the 15th day of March, 1837, aged seventy-two years." Then follow the words: "Not by works of righteousness

which we have done, but according to His own mercy He saved us. Reader, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" recounts, amongst his reasons for expecting a welcome in the next world, the circumstance that he had "stubb'd Thurnaby Waaste" in this. Cox understood his Bible better than Tennyson's hero; but the road across the Blue Mountains may really be taken as one proof of the solid and practical character of his piety. He undertook that work, and carried it out with religious thoroughness as an act of service to his country. He left behind him many descendants not unworthy of the name they bear. Up to the third generation they numbered nearly 500; and they have gone on multiplying diligently since.

The road across the Blue Mountains which Cox built with so fine an expenditure of courage and energy at once became a sort of artery through which a living stream of settlement flowed westward. Half the stockholders in Cumberland county were soon busy driving their sheep and cattle over the ranges to the untrodden pastures beyond. On April 26, 1815, Macquarie himself, with a large staff, crossed the ranges, and directed a township—Bathurst, to-day one of the most prosperous of inland towns on the continent—to be laid out.

But the wide spaces of unexplored territory beyond Bathurst, with their hint of flowing rivers and rich pastures, plainly demanded further exploration, and on May 13, 1815, Evans started out on his second trip. He found himself entangled amongst the tributaries of the Campbell River, and struck to the SSW. On the

tenth day he came to a chain of ponds, and from a hilltop caught the first glimpse of what is now known as the Lachlan Valley. On the 24th, following a creek, he suddenly found himself on the bank of a considerable river. The stream, indeed, was shrunken by drought, but the river-bed itself was seventy feet wide, and was thickly bordered with swamp oaks. He named it the Lachlan, and followed it for a week; till, on June 1, on a tall tree standing in an angle formed by the junction of the creek with the river, he carved the words "Evans, 1st June, 1815." This was the first tree marked by an explorer in Australia. It was, later, ring-barked by some prosaic settler, destitute of historic imagination, and killed; but the shield of wood with Evans's inscription on it was cut off, and is now in the Australian Museum in Sydney, a relic of genuine historical interest.

It is curious to remember that, at the moment Evans was chopping with his axe that inscription on an Australian gum-tree, Napoleon was gathering his army for his leap across the Meuse, while Wellington and Blücher were keeping watch against him within the Belgian frontier, and Waterloo was less than three weeks distant. The chop of Evans's hatchet was the symbol of one of those victories of peace less renowned, no doubt, than the clash of contending hosts at Waterloo, but historically, perhaps, almost as fruitful.

Before turning back, Evans climbed a lofty hill close at hand, and from its peak stared at the landscape running far to the horizon. To north-west was a line of purple hills, but on their highest peaks the purple faded into white, the white of snows.

On June 12, Evans was back at Bathurst with his report. His two journeys were brief in point of time, and not very extensive in space; but they were perhaps the two most fruitful in Australian history. They proved that the hitherto unknown continent was rich in natural wealth of every kind, and lay open, under radiant skies, to the nibbling flocks and the lowing herds of the coming settlers.

The first two Australian explorers, Evans and Oxley, deserve study, as representing the opposite extremes of Australian exploration: its good luck and its bad luck; its victories and its defeats; its puzzles and their solution—or their lack of solution. The experience of all after-explorers, in a sense, is summed up in them. But Evans had the good luck. He conducted only two explorations himself, and both were very short. The first represented a journey of less than 100 miles, and lasted a little over six weeks; the second was shorter still, lasting from May 13 to June 12, 1815; but both yielded great results. In both these trips his feet pressed virgin soil; his eyes looked on landscapes which up to that moment had lain beyond civilised knowledge. He discovered two great rivers—the Macquarie and the Lachlan; he opened up a whole new world to settlement.

The number of first things, indeed, which fell to the lot of Evans was remarkable. He was the first to cross the watershed of the Blue Mountains; the first discoverer of an Australian river flowing into the interior; the first to see an inland mountain range; the first to stare with astonished eyes at an Australian peak white with snow; the first to look on the characteristic

Australian landscape—limitless plains running to the very horizon, fat pasture-grounds for uncounted flocks. In his two brief journeys he sampled, in a sense, the whole vast and rich interior of Australia.

Oxley, the Surveyor-General of the colony, was an abler man than Evans, and his expeditions were planned on a larger scale, and moved in wider curves; but his story represents the dark side of Australian exploration. It is a tale of hardships and of disappointments, of puzzles unsolved or misread, of great hopes wrecked, and of great chances missed. Australia, as reflected in the experiences of Evans, was an earthly Paradise; as interpreted by Oxley's reports the continent was little better than a swampy Hades. It is possible to select from Oxley's bulky volumes, sentences recording his judgment on Australia at large, which resemble nothing so much as the verdict a coroner's jury, with noses in fingers, might pronounce on the decaying corpse of some ragged, unwashed, and nameless cast-away.

It was the puzzle of the rivers discovered by Evans which inspired Oxley's two great expeditions; and the puzzle was undeniable. The Macquarie and the Lachlan, as reported by Evans, inverted all the known laws of rivers. In place of beginning inland, and flowing to the sea, they started almost from the coast, and flowed towards the centre of the continent. They started from nearly the same spot, but their streams diverged as they flowed. When plotted on the map—as far as made known by Evans—their beds resembled the containing sides of a vast triangle, of which the starting-point of the two rivers was the vertex. If the Macquarie

kept on the line of its known course, its mouth would be found somewhere in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Lachlan, judged in the same way, would break into the Indian Ocean near Dampier's Land.

Two great rivers flowing, not towards the coast, but from it: this was the puzzle. Only two solutions seemed possible, and each was equally bewildering. Did the two rivers end in an inland sea—an Australian Mediterranean under the tropics; or were they twin Niles, growing navigable as they ran, and flowing across the continent for, say, 2000 miles till they broke into the ocean? Either solution of the problem seemed incredible; but both challenged the curiosity of the early settlers in the highest degree, and Oxley set out to solve the puzzle.

W. C. Wentworth wrote in almost lyrical prose of the destiny, wrapped up in the puzzle of the inland flowing rivers, which awaited the infant colony. At the point, for example, where the Macquarie was last seen, it had, if it kept its line, a course of 2000 miles before it. "If this river," wrote Wentworth, "be already of the size of the Hawkesbury at Windsor, which is not less than 250 yards in breadth, and of sufficient depth to float a 74-gun ship, it is not difficult to imagine what must be its magnitude at its confluence with the ocean, before it can arrive at which it has to traverse a country nearly 2000 miles in extent. If it possesses the usual sinuosities of rivers, its course to the sea cannot be less than from 5000 to 6000 miles, and the endless accession of tributary streams which it must receive in its passage through so great an extent of country will, without doubt,

enable it to vie in point of magnitude with any river in the world."

Seldom did an explorer start in search of a bigger prize or return with more melancholy results. Oxley set out in search of a sea; he brought back the report of a swamp.

CHAPTER IV

IN SEARCH OF AN AUSTRALIAN NILE

Oxley's first expedition started on April 6, 1817; it returned, bedraggled, melancholy, and defeated, on August 29. It was a party of twelve, well equipped, with fourteen horses and two boats; it included two botanists. Evans was second in command. Oxley's immediate business was to follow the course of the Lachlan, and solve what we have called "the puzzle of the rivers." The Lachlan, instead of the Macquarie, was chosen, probably because it lay further south, and there was, at least, a chance that it might fall into Spencer Gulf, or the Great Australian Bight, and so its course be shorter.

The story of the expedition, as recorded in Oxley's bulky Journals, is one long tale of a despairing, and finally defeated, wrestle with what proved to be the most misbehaved of rivers. Oxley was a seaman; he had seen service in the Great War, and might, indeed, be described as having been trained in Nelson's school. He had a good sailor's pluck and resource, but his courage lacked that note of gaiety which is the mark of a typical seaman; and it is often difficult to say whether Oxley's Journal reflects the gloominess of the landscapes across which he crept, or the landscapes took their hopeless tint from the gloom of the writer of the Journal.

A depot was formed under the shadow of Evans's

marked tree on the Lachlan, as a base for the expedition; but the river, it was found, changed its character almost from the very point at which the disgusted Oxley began his exploration. It loitered through unending flats: it rambled into innumerable branches; it threatened to expire finally in a swamp, or disappear beneath a landscape of weeds.

This extraordinary river, indeed, seemed to violate all the known and respectable laws of Nature. There had been no rains; no creek bigger than a trickle had joined the main stream for 150 miles. And yet, beneath unclouded skies, the water rose a foot every night, till it was eighteen feet deep, and was spreading, a dust-edged flood, over the arid plains! And nobody could guess whence the strange water came.

On May 12 the Lachlan threatened to disappear finally in a swamp which stretched to the horizon. Oxley climbed to the nearest eminence: "the whole country from the north-west to the west," he says, "was either a complete marsh or lay under water." He followed a branch of the river which still struggled —or seemed to struggle—towards the south-west; but it, too, presently died into a marsh. It was vain to attempt to follow a river which no longer flowed, and Oxley changed his course to the south-west, striking for Cape Northumberland, and hoping thus to intersect any river which made for the sea betwixt Cape Otway and Spencer Gulf.

It was a courageous decision, and bigger possibilities than Oxley dreamed of—or, alas! ever realised—lay wrapped up in it. At that moment the unknown Murrumbidgee lay less than 100 miles due south of

him; what is now Melbourne was only little over 300 miles distant on the same line. A success which might have advanced the settlement of Australia by half a century hung on that change in Oxley's course.

It was May 18 when Oxley abandoned part of his baggage and struck across the country in this new direction; but his ill-luck still pursued him, or rather ran before him. Hitherto the journey consisted mainly of splashing through swamps, with the perpetual risk of being drowned. Now Oxley and his men had to toil, panting, over stony ridges, prickly with acacia bushes, while the sun beat fiercely upon them, and they ran a serious and daily risk of perishing through thirst. Oxley's Journal at this point again reflects the landscape with painful fidelity. He describes the country as "abandoned by every living creature capable of getting out of it. Our horses, I think, cannot endure this miserable existence much longer."

But the courage of a good seaman is not easily overcome, and Oxley pushed on till June 6. Then he gave up the attempt to reach the coast, and swung the heads of his stumbling horses round to the north-west, striking back for the Lachlan. It would at least give them enough water to drink. Before leaving, Allan Cunningham, the botanist of the party, planted some acorns and peach-stones. If they grew they would serve as a memorial of the party "should these desolate plains," Oxley says, "be ever again visited by civilised man, of which, however, I think there is very little probability." Oxley had yet to learn—or rather he never learned—how the Australian landscape changes

with the weather. As little could he dream that this very country would afterwards witness a rush of miners for gold, would be sprinkled over with villages, and rich with slowly grazing flocks. The known is not inevitably the key to the unknown.

When he turned his horses' heads to the north, it may be added, he was turning his back on the greatest chance ever offered to an Australian explorer. At that moment—such was the irony of fate—the Murrumbidgee was only twenty-three miles to the south of him. What is now known as Deniliquin, with all the rich pastoral country lying about it, was less than a hundred miles distant. Was there ever so great a chance missed by so narrow a margin?

On June 8 Oxley had to change his course again. "The country as far as the eye can reach," he writes in his Journal, "is one continued thicket of eucalyptus scrub." It was hopeless to struggle through it; and he swung round more to the east, and took the line which would bring him to the station under Peel's Range, which he had left on June 6. On June 21 he writes: "The further we proceed westerly the more convinced I am that for all practical purposes of civilised man the interior of this country westward of a certain meridian is uninhabitable, deprived, as it is, of wood, water, and grass." As it happens, the very richest part of Australia—the orchard-lands of Victoria, the wheat-lands of South Australia, to say nothing of the rich goldfields and silver mines of the States—all lie within that territory which Oxley described as "uninhabitable," and "deprived of wood, water, and grass." At the moment he turned back in this

despairing mood he was actually nearer Cape Northumberland than he was to Sydney.

On June 23 Oxley struck the Lachlan again, and at a new point, and he found it to be a new river—a much more rational and decently behaved stream than when he had turned his back upon it and started in an attempt to reach Cape Northumberland. It was innocent of marshes, and flowed southward in a definite, though narrow, channel, with a lacework of trees and lightly timbered plains on each bank. But there was nothing stable in the conduct of this disreputable stream. It presently began to ramble afresh; it dawdled into a swamp again; by June 28 its banks had disappeared beneath the lazy waters of a far-stretching marsh. Oxley struggled on doggedly, but by July 3 the moist soil was found to be so perforated with holes made by crayfish that the floundering horses could not cross it. Still Oxley persisted; but on July 7 he records in his Journal his final judgment that "the interior of this vast country is a marsh, and uninhabitable. There is a dreary uniformity in its barren desolateness which wearies one more than I am able to express. One tree, one soil, one water, and one description of bird, fish, or animal prevails for ten miles or for a hundred."

Was there ever written a more melancholy verdict on a whole continent, or one which was in more desperate conflict with the actual facts! An unsuspected goldfield lay at that moment almost beneath the very spot on which Oxley stood. Thriving sheep-stations to-day stretch where he only saw the desolate marshes. Direct to the south of him, only about

sixty miles distant, was the point on the Murrumbidgee where Hay now stands.

On August 4 Oxley left the Lachlan in this mood of despair, and pursued a northern course until he struck the Macquarie. He found it a beautiful stream, with definite banks, a clear, running current, rich in fish, and framed with trees, with lush pasture-lands on either bank. In his Journal Oxley takes his revenge on the Lachlan by contrasting it with the Macquarie. The two rivers, he says, are "different in their habits, their appearance, and, above all, in the country bordering on them. The Macquarie renders fertile a great extent of country"—while the dissipated and wretched Lachlan, in brief, creates only wet flats and uninhabitable morasses. The contrast between the two rivers as depicted in Oxley's Journal at this point resembles nothing so much as the contrast between the portraits which, say, a Rechabite might draw of a hopeless drunkard and of a prosperous member of his own Order. It was with these twin pictures that Oxley, on August 29, 1819, reached Bathurst, and ended his first expedition.

Of the two supposed Australian "Niles," one had thus ended in a marsh; and from this incident Oxley, with characteristically gloomy imagination, deduced the conclusion that the whole continent was nothing better than one measureless and hopeless swamp. But there remained the Macquarie, and its stream, as far as it had been followed, was running clear, cool, and swift, straight towards the centre of the continent. If it was pouring itself into a central lake, that "lake" must be nothing less than an

inland sea, a fresh-water Mediterranean. If no such lake existed, and the stream still pursued its course, it really was an Australian Nile. In May 1818, Oxley started with another party to solve this problem.

It was a strong party, with Dr. Harris as surgeon, Fraser as botanist, Evans as second in command, twelve men and eighteen horses. A party was sent ahead to build two boats at Wellington Valley, and from that depot as a base the expedition began.

For the first 125 miles the journey resembled a ramble through a park, while the boats, laden with stores, floated on the current of a river almost like the Thames. On June 23 Oxley, for once hopeful, sent messengers back with despatches written in rainbow tints. But within twenty-four hours from the despatch of that letter the whole landscape, as the party sauntered onwards, changed. The country grew flat; the Macquarie began to ramble from its banks after the evil fashion of the Lachlan.

Oxley had made his second depot at Mount Harris, about 150 miles north of Bathurst, and from that point begin what are known as the Macquarie Marshes. He had hit, in a word—unlucky man!—the second of the two great systems of river marshes in Riverina, those of the Lachlan and of the Macquarie. From the summit of Mount Harris there stretched before him, almost to the horizon, the familiar and hateful landscape of yellow, blowing reeds.

Taking the largest of his boats, with four volunteers and a month's provisions, Oxley started, determined to follow the stream as long as a current could be discovered and there was enough water under his keel

to keep it afloat; Evans, during his absence, was to make an excursion to the north-east. The day was stormy with rain when Oxley pushed off on his melancholy adventure, but the skies above were scarcely so wet as the earth beneath. There stretched before him nothing but a landscape of half-drowned trees. At night the party took refuge on a bit of land so nearly submerged as scarcely to yield a patch solid enough on which to light a fire. There was a current, however, under the boat, flowing—or rather creeping—towards some unknown goal, and Oxley, cheered by that fact, pushed on day after day, each hour expecting to see breaking on his sight, and running with a clear line to the horizon, that vast central lake which, as he still believed, covered the chief part of the continent. But no lake made its appearance; instead, the river vanished in every direction beneath a limitless expanse of reeds, broken by the lines of no discoverable channel. The long-sought-for Australian sea—an inland Mediterranean—Oxley still persuaded himself lay almost at his touch, but it was unapproachable; and the little party of disgusted explorers at last swung round their boat and crept back to the depot at Mount Harris.

During Oxley's absence, Evans had made a journey to the north-east, and with his usual luck had discovered a river, which he named the Castlereagh. The depot camp was abandoned, and the whole party, beaten with incessant rains, splashed their way across bog and quagmire towards a line of blue hills seen by Evans, and named by him the Arbuthnot Range. The Castlereagh lay in their track. It was now running bank-high, and they had to wait till August 2

before they could cross. The range was at last reached, and skirting it they came to what are now known as the Liverpool Plains. Here was, at least, one gleam of good luck—of magnificent luck, indeed—in the black skies of Oxley's story. The Liverpool Plains are a vast stretch of the richest pastoral country, 17,000 square miles in area, apparently the bed of some ancient and shallow sea, and to-day they are the field of about the most prosperous settlement in Australia.

On September 2 the party, pushing on, struck the river now named the Peel, or the Namoi. Still pressing westward they crossed the main ridge. It was a belt of deep glens and sudden valleys, of waterfalls and precipices, the Blue Mountains repeated in a more northerly latitude; these hills are, in fact, an extension of the very range which, within forty miles of Sydney, baffled all explorers so long. Across this wild country the footsore group toiled till, on September 23, Oxley and Evans, climbing a tall peak, from its summit caught a glimpse of the ocean. They felt as Xenophon's Greeks must have felt when they saw the blue waters of the Euxine, and raised their cry of "Thalatta." Oxley's prose grows almost lyrical as he tells the tale. "Bilboa's ecstasy at the first sight of the South Sea," he writes, "could not have been greater than ours when, on gaining the summit of this mountain, we beheld Old Ocean at our feet. . . . Every difficulty vanished. In imagination we were already home."

He named the peak Mount Seaview, and guessed its height to be 6000 feet above sea-level. The descent to the coast-line was most difficult. The slopes resembled precipices, the slippery grass made every step

a peril; with immense difficulty they reached the foot of the mountain. A river, which they named the Hastings, was discovered, and followed to the sea-coast, and to its mouth Oxley gave the name of Port Macquarie.

There remained the difficult march along the coast to Sydney. On the 19th their way was barred by a sea-lagoon, so deep and wide that it could not be forded, while their scanty provisions made them reluctant to attempt the journey round its head. By a happy chance they came, at that exact moment, upon a boat half-buried in the sand, the relic of some nameless sea-tragedy. For the explorers, it was a windfall of priceless value, and they carried it with them for ninety miles, crossing by this means many streams and sea-channels. With this derelict boat, in fact, Oxley crossed the mouth of the Manning, without realising it was a river, and on November 1 the footsore, weather-beaten party came in sight of the rough buildings of Port Stephens.

Oxley's report was sufficient to chill all enthusiasm for future explorations. It is true he discovered the Liverpool Plains; but his ill-luck darkened for Oxley even this shining patch of triumph. These rich plains were inaccessible from the coast, owing to the mountains; and unapproachable from the south, inland, owing to the Macquarie Marshes. Port Macquarie, too, when examined, was discovered to be a difficult bar harbour. Oxley found no practicable route to Liverpool Plains; perhaps he did not appreciate the need of such a route. It was left to Allan Cunningham, years afterwards, to bring these great plains within

reach of settlement by the discovery of a practicable stock route.

Oxley's reports make melancholy reading. They represent the wreck of every hope, the defeat of all cheerful expectation, and they are, in fact, a sort of death sentence on the whole continent. Yet his expeditions were both brief in time and narrow in area. If the course of his first expedition is plotted on the map it resembles roughly a right-angled triangle, the longer side, about 225 miles, running from Bathurst westward; the base runs north for 100 miles, while the hypotenuse furnishes the line back to Bathurst.

The route of the second expedition, if plotted in the same manner on the map, is a sort of rough triangle, a line running north for 150 miles to Mount Harris, another line running east for 300 miles to the mouth of the Hastings forming the containing sides, while 200 miles of sea-coast from Port Macquarie to Sydney constitutes the base.

The two areas explored by Oxley's expeditions, in a word, are little more than pin-points—or mosquito-bites—on the vast map of Australia; yet on the strength of what he found—or failed to find—in those two brief journeys, and within those tiny areas, Oxley pronounced sentence of final and universal failure on the whole continent. His report, in fact, checked exploration for the next twelve years.

In 1823 Oxley started on a short expedition to examine the northern sea-coast, and report on certain inlets as sites for penal establishments. On this trip he made one considerable discovery, a great and navigable river, the Brisbane. But his belief in the

existence of a vast inland lake was still obstinate; it was, indeed, a fixed idea. And when he stared, from the summit of Termination Hill, on the winding curve of the great stream, he persuaded himself that it had its source in that inland lake. But Oxley's ill-luck pursued him even in the so-called "discovery" of the Brisbane. He was exploring Moreton Bay, and amongst the natives discovered a castaway white man of the name of Pamphlet, who had lived for seven months amongst the blacks. It was Pamphlet who told the story of a large and navigable river emptying itself into the southern extremity of the bay. Pamphlet, in a word, and not Oxley, was the discoverer of the Brisbane.

The puzzle of Australian exploration was, at first, as we have seen, the problem of the rivers. The rivers discovered after the Blue Mountains had been pierced challenged curiosity. They ran the wrong way—not from the centre of the continent to the coast, but from the coast to the centre of the continent. This circumstance seemed to offer to every explorer an opportunity, as well as a challenge. The rivers must surely be the easiest of pathways to the vast and, as yet, unknown spaces of central Australia.

This belief is the explanation of Oxley's two expeditions; and it was his misfortune that the streams nearest the point where settlement first broke through the Blue Mountains were examples of the very worst type of Australian rivers. The Lachlan and the Macquarie were not even streams of the second rank. Each was the tributary of a tributary; and within 200 miles from Bathurst—Oxley's starting-point—each river prac-

tically expired into a swamp—or a landscape of swamps. The Macquarie found its way into what is, not without some justification, called "the mighty Darling," but this, in turn, is only a tributary of the Murray; and the Macquarie, it must be added, creeps—or, rather, trickles—into the Darling only by a sort of back-door passage. The Lachlan is a feeder of the Murrumbidgee, another tributary of the Murray; and when, in 1829, Sturt examined the junction betwixt the Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee he found that, of the Lachlan, nothing but a dry bed—a mere sand crevice—survived.

But there was a third river near the point where settlement was streaming through the Blue Mountains, and further south than the Lachlan—the Murrumbidgee. No exploration on a large scale was undertaken for years after Oxley's return; his gloomy reports not only slew hope, they chilled curiosity. But the fringe of settlement was being constantly pushed outwards. Nameless squatters, with their flocks, crept across roadless plains and bridgeless rivers, occupying the country as they explored it. In this way the Murrumbidgee had become known, though it had no official "discovery." This was, on the whole, a happy circumstance, for, as a result, the native name was allowed to survive. If "discovered" by any professional explorer, it might have been named the "Smith," or the "Jones."

When, in 1823, Captain Currie and Major Ovens explored that district, the Murrumbidgee was already known to the settlers, and the temptation to follow the clue of this, the third unknown river, was irresistible.

Oxley, it will be remembered, put on record his verdict —a fact he claimed to have demonstrated beyond doubt—that no river entered the sea between Cape Otway and Spencer Gulf; a judgment singular for its inaccuracy, even in the long catalogue of Oxley's mistaken opinions. As a matter of fact, the whole river system of eastern Australia empties itself into the sea within that very area. The Darling, in the north, gathers within its banks all the streams betwixt itself and the coast: the Murrumbidgee, in the south, takes in the Lachlan and its tributaries; and both the Darling and the Murrumbidgee pour their gathered waters into the Murray, which reaches the sea at Lake Alexandrina.

Oxley further claimed to have "demonstrated beyond doubt" that "the country south of the parallel of 34 degrees and west of the meridian 147 degrees 30 minutes east is uninhabitable, and useless for all the purposes of civilised man." And the richest parts of both Victoria and South Australia lie within those very boundaries!

But in 1823 the notion that there were no eastward-flowing rivers north of Spencer Gulf still obtained, and the Governor, Sir Thomas Brisbane, was anxious to test this theory. He proposed to land a party of convicts somewhere near Wilson's Promontory, and offer them a free pardon, and grants of land, if they could find their way back to Sydney. This was exploration of a cheap and original type. Brisbane asked a young man, Hamilton Hume, who had already won some reputation as a bushman, to take charge of the party. Hume was an Australian native, with all the shrewdness of

the type. He refused the proposal, but offered to lead a party from Lake George, near Yass, to Westernport, if the Governor would undertake the cost. An expedition from the known to the unknown, in Hume's judgment, offered a better chance of success than one from the unknown to the known.

CHAPTER V

HOW PORT PHILLIP WAS REACHED

Hume was at that time only twenty-seven years of age, a typical young Australian, tall and thin, with sunburnt face and keen brown eyes. He had tireless activity, keen senses, and a matchless eye for "country." When only seventeen years old he had discovered the rich and beautiful country round Berrima. When not yet twenty he had discovered Lake Bathurst, and received a grant of 300 acres of land as a reward. Evans, the first explorer, had spent his apprenticeship in English dockyards; Oxley was a sailor; Sturt and Mitchell were soldiers. Hume stands out amongst the early explorers as a native Australian, and a true "son of the bush."

Hume's terms were accepted, but there was much delay in equipping the party, and a retired coasting captain named Hovell offered to join the expedition and find half the necessary cattle and horses. Hume and Hovell accordingly put their resources together, each bringing three men with him into the party. The help yielded by the Government was both grudging and scanty, and the expedition was probably the worst equipped that ever started on a great enterprise. Its outfit consisted of five bullocks, three horses, and two carts. It was badly organised as well as badly equipped. To have no head to a party is a misfortune; but to

have *two* heads—and heads that refuse to agree—is an even worse calamity. The combination of leaders in this expedition was that of "an old salt" with a young bushman; and it was inevitable that such a combination should breed quarrels. Hovell, it is fair to say, was not quite "an old salt"; as a matter of fact he was only eleven years older than Hume. But he had the peremptory habits of the coasting skipper; and Hume, sure of his knowledge of the bush, and accustomed to the vagrant freedom of the bush, resented Hovell's accents of command. The result was a series of wrangles, which spread through the whole trip, and overflowed into wrathful pamphlets for years after it was ended.

Yet the trip was a success, and a success in quite a memorable degree. It not only pierced the darkness which lay on the country south of the Murrumbidgee to the sea, and set the tide of settlement flowing towards Port Phillip; it scattered that fog of gloom which Oxley's expeditions had thrown over the entire continent. It gave a new horizon, not only to Australian geography, but to Australian history.

The party started on October 17, 1824, their point of departure being Lake George. This was in itself a blunder, since it launched the expedition on the worst possible route. A glance at the map shows that if they had started from Yass, and taken a straight line to their objective—Westernport—they would have had a perfectly easy route to the Murrumbidgee, crossing it near Wagga Wagga. In that course they would have encountered hardly a single hill. Thence they might have driven their cart across Riverina to Albury—the

point at which they crossed the Murray. Once across the Murray the country to Westernport offers little difficulties.

But Lake George was chosen as the starting-point, a choice due probably to the fact that Hume was familiar with the district, and had a small "run" in it. Now the line from Lake George to Westernport runs through some of the most difficult country in Australia. It crosses the deep gorge of the Murrumbidgee, and the still wider gorges of the Coodradigby. It traverses the shoulders of the Australian Alps, touches the wild country at the head of the Tumut River and the Benambra Mountains to the west, and crosses the Buffalo Mountains a little to the west of Omeo. South of the Murray the line runs through the wild southward-looking escarpments of the Snowy Mountains in Gippsland, and crosses the difficult ravines and pinnacles about the source of the Yarra.

Hovell, with a seaman's instinct, clung stubbornly to the air-line of the route laid down in their instructions. He would march—as he used to sail—by the compass. Hume, on the other hand, with the practical sense of the bushman, was always tempted to seek the easy plains far to the right; and the conflict betwixt Hovell's unreasoning obstinacy in following his compass, and Hume's impulse as a bushman to take the easy route by the plains, goes far to explain the disputes betwixt the two leaders.

Starting on the route to which they were committed, Hovell and Hume toiled along the eastern slopes of the great range. Their plan was to cross all the streams at their heads. Perhaps Blaxland's method misled

them. His problem was to keep to the ridge that divided two water systems, and he could only be sure of doing this by the device of rounding the starting-point of every stream. But Hume and Hovell had no such problem to solve; and the plan adopted kept them on the flank of the great coastal range, with its wall-like cliffs, its valleys like chasms, its huge slopes almost impassable with mingled scrub and rock.

Hume realised the blunder of their course at this early stage of the expedition, and proposed to swing to the west and strike the level country; but Hovell was obstinate, and the party struggled on, day after day, through a thousand difficulties. On October 19 they reached the Murrumbidgee, crossing the watershed betwixt it and the Lachlan. It was in flood, its turbid waters racing swiftly through a channel fretted with rocks. A leader less resourceful than Hume might well have shrunk from the task of crossing it; but this was exactly the sort of difficulty which called out his fine qualities. He took the body of their solitary cart off its wheels, and with the aid of a tarpaulin turned it into a raft. This occupied him till the 22nd; on the morning of that day he called upon one of the party to join him, and each holding one end of a thin line betwixt his teeth, the two men sprang into the swift stream and struggled to the further bank, drawing a rope fastened to the bight of the line with them. This, in turn, was fastened to the raft, which served as a punt, and was dragged to and fro across the stream till the party and all their stores were on the further bank. The river must have been crossed in this fashion very near the spot where the Barren Jack reservoir—

the boldest engineering feat yet attempted in Australia —is being constructed.

After crossing the Murrumbidgee they struck to the south-east, and found themselves plunged into almost more difficult country than that through which they had already struggled: and the story of their adventures, punctuated with quarrels betwixt the leaders, is dreary reading. Once the party separated, Hovell with one man setting out on a cruise of his own, but the rocky chasms on every side were too much for his seamanship, and he rejoined Hume. From October 19 to November 8 was one long, nerve-shattering, heart-breaking struggle across almost impossible country.

On October 31, amongst the savage gorges of the Coodradigby, it seemed as if the expedition would be finally arrested. It was Hume's sure glance as a bushman which found the one pass, narrow and difficult, through which they could creep. Rusden, in his booklet on *The Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip*, says: "I, myself, remember standing on the pinnacle of a rocky point and admiring, as I viewed, the sagacity with which Hume's keen eye detected the favourable sinuosities by which he threaded his way across the Coodradigby gorge. What paths there may exist now I know not, but for many years only one was known, possible even for a horse, between the tracks selected at a glance by Hume, and the impassable junction of the Coodradigby with the Murrumbidgee."

On November 8 the footsore and disheartened little group had climbed to the edge of a vast plateau, and found a sufficient compensation for even their toils. On the eastern and southern horizon there broke into

sudden view a wall of mountains, black on the lower slopes, blue midway, and snowy white on their rounded summits. It was the Australian Alps—Kosciusko in the south-east, and the now familiar peaks, Feathertop, Cobbler, &c.—then first seen by the eyes of white men. What Hume and his comrades stared at was only a section of the great coastal range, called in the far north the Liverpool range, at the centre the Blue Mountains, and here to the south, where they reach their greatest height, and are crowned with dazzling snows, the Australian Alps.

Hume—always with a bushman's eye for the easier course—now proposed, yet more urgently, that they should swing to the west. These mountain ranges, their flanks blue with distance, their peaks white and pure with snow, were beautiful to look at, but would make bad travelling. Hovell, on the other hand, wished still to follow his compass, even though it pointed across the Alps. The dispute betwixt the two leaders grew hot; each was stubborn, and finally the party split in two. But the outfit had to be divided as well as the men, and the little stock was solemnly piled in separate heaps. There was only one tent, and it was proposed to settle the conflicting claims to it by the process of cutting it in halves. Over the solitary frying-pan Hovell and Hume came to a personal struggle, in which the frying-pan—with much injury to its usefulness—was broken in two. Every writer since, who has told the tale of the Hume and Hovell expedition, has solemnly given a place in it to the tragedy of that broken frying-pan. It is the only frying-pan that has attained an historic immortality.

Hovell, with his section of the party, started on his own track, but quickly found that he had made an evil choice of route, and rejoined Hume, bringing back with him, let us hope, not only a chastened spirit, but his fragment of the frying-pan.

On November 16 the party unexpectedly came upon a majestic river, deep and swift, eighty yards wide, with banks rich in grass, the stateliest stream yet discovered in Australia. Hume, with a touch of filial piety, named the river after his father, but "the Hume" is a name which has failed to stick. Sturt, later, named it the Murray, after Sir Gilbert Murray, Secretary of State for the Colonies. That gentleman, as it happened, did not learn for years afterwards that his name had secured the only immortality it will ever possess by being linked by an unknown explorer to an unknown stream in Australia.

The party struck the Murray close to where Albury now stands, and they had to travel up the stream for many miles before they succeeded, with the help of an improvised wicker-boat, covered with a tarpaulin, in crossing it. The other members of the party shrank from embarking in Hume's tiny and fragile craft. They had done enough to justify the expedition, they argued; why not return? Hovell shared that view, if he did not originate it. But Hume brought matters to a crisis by saying to the leader of the discontented group, "If you don't do what I tell you and cross, I will throw you in," and that argument was final. When they camped on the further side of the river, each leader chose a big gum-tree, and cut his name deeply upon it with a tomahawk. Hume's tree lasted till 1888, when

some travelling swagmen lit a fire against its dry trunk and it was destroyed. Hovell's tree is still standing, but the tablet on which his name was cut was turned into a target for local rifle-practice, and the inscription has been practically effaced—so mournfully weak is what may be called the historic imagination in the youthful Australian mind.

The route of the party now lay open right to the sea, but still it presented some difficulties. They had to cross the spurs of the Alpine chain, the watershed betwixt the Murray and the streams flowing to the south. On November 24 they reached what is now known as the Ovens; and thence, up to December 1, the diary of the expedition is a story of ascents and descents over rocky hill-ranges, and struggles with muddy creeks, while bush fires sent their smoke to the sky from the unknown country ahead of them.

Another river, running through lightly timbered country rich with grass, was struck on December 3. Hovell named it after himself, but Hume gave it the name by which it is known to-day, the Goulburn. A huge fallen tree stretching from bank to bank supplied a natural bridge. On the 9th, beyond a deep creek which they named King Parrot Creek, they met with difficult and stony country; midway across it a vast scrub seemed to bar further advance. They fell back to King Parrot Creek, and Hume and Hovell started alone with four days' rations to seek a passage, climbing a mountain which they named Mount Disappointment. No passage could be found, and the pair returned to their base at the camp and started on a new line to the north. On the 12th they succeeded in

getting past Mount Disappointment and camped on a watercourse which they named Sunday Creek.

From this their track lay through good country, though it was parched with drought. The landscape grew more beautiful as they advanced, with rounded hills, rolling downs, and open forests. On December 16 they saw on the level horizon to the south-west what they took to be burning grass. It was the sea, a grey floor, with dancing waves reflecting the sun. They had achieved their task!

They seem to have struck the coast somewhere betwixt the Werribee and Geelong; and a characteristic dispute arose betwixt the leaders, Hovell contending that the bay upon which they looked was Western Port; Hume that it was Port Phillip. He recognised, and identified, from Flinders's description, the peak now known as the You-Yangs; and the sure eye of the bushman was more accurate than the observations—if he made them—of the shipmaster.

Both Hovell and Hume published the story of the expedition; Hovell in 1826, and again in 1837. His story is a sober, decorous tale, rich in judicious reticence, and giving no hint of the many quarrels betwixt the members of the party. Hume's story, written in 1824, is a much more human bit of literature, and splutters with anger on almost every page at the "unfairness" of his companion in thrusting him into the background, and practically claiming as his own all the fame of the expedition.

Hume incidentally supplies many interesting details of the story. Thus he tells how, in order to raise the necessary equipment of the party, he had "to sell a

very fine imported iron plough"; and evidently he never quite recovered from the regret of that transaction. The discovery of new territories, wider and richer than many kingdoms, hardly compensated him for the loss of that plough! Hume throws emphasis, again, upon the fact that when they parted with the cart in the difficult country of the Coodradigby, he "took his tarpaulin with him, while Mr. Hovell left his." Hume "remembered they might encounter other rivers as formidable as the Murrumbidgee, and then it could be used in the manufacture of a boat"; and the whole expedition, as it turned out, hung upon the circumstance of that tarpaulin being taken on. "Had I not taken mine," says Hume, "the expedition must have returned." When before in history was so much wrapped up in a tarpaulin—and that probably an old one!

Hume makes, with great bluntness, and sustains by evidence—*quantum valeat*—from the other members of the party, the charge that Hovell repeatedly wanted to abandon the adventure. When they stood upon the bank of the swollen Murrumbidgee, Boyd says: "Captain Hovell was discouraged and wished to turn back. I heard him say to Mr. Hume, 'We shall never get on with our expedition; we cannot cross those rivers.' Mr. Hume replied, 'If you think you can't, you had better go back, but I mean to go on.' Hovell then asked, 'How do you mean to get across this river?' Mr. Hume answered, 'That is best known to myself. I will soon get over. Boyd, you get a tomahawk.'"

Hovell, it seems, in the wild country of the Narren-

gullen meadows, lost himself for part of two days. "When I found him," says Hume, "he was actually unsuspectingly travelling back in the direction of Yass." When they stood on the banks of the Murray, Hovell, again, in a mood of despair, "volunteered," says Hume, "an address to the men, pointing out the hazards existing in the rear, and the probability of others ahead, and asking whether it would not be the most prudent step to turn back." "On this," writes Hume, "I got angry, and told Mr. Hovell that I preferred being rid of him altogether, rather than having one in his position setting such a bad example. I also threatened to put Claude in the river if he did not cross it with me, at the same time seizing him by the throat as if to make good my threat."

Boyd confirms this, and says that "when the men hesitated, Mr. Hume addressed himself to me, 'Boyd, will you go with me?' I said, 'Yes.' Mr. Hume cried that he was resolved to go on, and so long as he had a horse or a bullock he should kill and eat it."

When they had crossed the Murray, and travelled two or three miles, they hit a tributary creek running bank-high. "Hovell," Boyd says, "again addressed the men, advising them to go back, saying he was determined to go back himself. Our tarpaulin, which was all our dependence, was worn out, and what had we to trust to for getting back or for our lives but it? Hume thereupon said they would never stick for want of a boat. If the tarpaulin *did* go he would kill a bullock or a horse, and make a tarpaulin out of its hide rather than be beat. Each sticking to his point,

Mr. Hume got ready and went across with his men, but after he had packed up and made a start on the other side, Mr. Hovell called out to be taken with him. I had to swim across for the boat which Mr. Hume rigged again, and we all went on together."

When, after leaving Sunday Creek, there was a shining gleam on the edge of the distant horizon, Hume declared it was the sea; but Hovell, seaman though he was, did not know salt water when he saw it, and said it was smoke. Later in the day they came upon a blackfellows' camp, with oyster shells lying about it. Hume pointed these out to Hovell, and asked him where they came from? The oysters proved the sea.

On December 18 the party started on their return journey. The next morning was Sunday, and as they were preparing to start, they heard the faint, dull report of a gun coming from that curve of the bay where Geelong now stands. Hume wanted to turn back, certain there was a ship in those waters, but was outvoted. "We camped that night," he says, "on the right bank of the Werribee. The high range in the distance formed a beautiful object round to the Station Peak of Flinders." They could see the westerly continuation of Mount Disappointment, and named it Mount Wentworth; this is now known as Mount Macedon.

Hume led by a more direct track returning, his route running parallel to the present railway line. They travelled 670 miles in reaching Port Phillip from Lake George, but they made the return trip in 550 miles; and so sure was Hume's eye for country, so exact his

recollection of the track by which they had come, that, again and again, he was able to tell the party precisely when they would strike the outward trail. And this, it must be remembered, was only the faint print of feet, and of a single pair of wheels, on the wide, grass-covered landscape.

The party reached Hume's station near Lake George, their starting-point, on January 18; the expedition thus taking almost exactly three months. In that brief period, and by that single, inadequate and quarrelling expedition, a new and rich province was given to Australia.

Hume was, no doubt, a fine bushman, but he had his limitations. He was not, like Sturt, a born leader of men. He perhaps might have taken the immortal six in their whale-boat down 1800 miles of the Murray, but it may be doubted whether he could have brought them back again. In his *Australia*, Mr. Lang, with a fine confusion of metaphor, says: "Turn a bushman adrift anywhere, and, like a bee, he will wing his way home." But when he has got home he may be as inarticulate as the bee, as far as giving any account of the way he came, or making it known for the guidance of those who come after him. Hovell's seamanship, as he himself claimed, had taught him—or should have taught him—at least, how to determine his position at any point, how to record compass-bearings, how to plot a track upon a chart, and so make the knowledge of new lands they had won available for others. Hume lacked this art.

In the controversy which raged afterwards, however, Hume asserted his equality with Hovell even at this point.

"Whether the fault lay with Mr. Hovell, or with the instruments," says Hume, "no correct observations were taken. I could not use the quadrant, but I set out trusting to my compass, my knowledge of bush-travel, a stout heart, and a hearty constitution. Accordingly my compass, my base-line, the sun and the heavens, and my dead reckoning, brought us safely to Hobson's Bay, and they did not fail in bringing us back with equal safety to our starting-point."

Hume and Hovell, it will be noted, differed as to the spot which they had reached. Hovell asserted it was Western Port; Hume claimed that it was Port Phillip. Hovell's calculations of latitude and longitude, if he made any, were certainly wrong. Hume identified the spot by a bushman's proof; he recognised the Station Peak of Flinders.

It must not be supposed that Hume and Hovell's expedition in 1824 was the actual "discovery" of Port Phillip. The great bay was discovered by Lieutenant John Murray, in command of the *Lady Nelson*, in 1802. He gave it the name of Port Phillip, and the rocky point on the east side of the entrance still bears the name Point Nepean he gave to it. Flinders, on April 26 of the same year, discovered, independently, the entrance to Port Phillip—or, rather, blundered through the entrance—and ran his ship on a mud-bank as soon as he entered. Bass, in his whale-boat, had discovered Western Port nearly four years before—on January 4, 1798—and it shows the vagueness and uncertainty of those early voyages and discoveries that Flinders, when he had got his ship off the mud-bank and dropped anchor just as night fell, was persuaded that

he was in Western Port, "although," he says, "the narrowness of the entrance did by no means correspond to the width given to it by Mr. Bass."

Two great bays so near each other as Western Port and Port Phillip might well puzzle early discoverers; but it is worth noting that both Flinders, who came by sea, and Hume and Hovell, who approached by land, confounded the two bays. Flinders, a good seaman, when the next day dawned, felt quite sure he was not in Western Port, and, as he writes, "I congratulated myself on having made a new and useful discovery. But," he frankly adds, "here, again, I was in error"; for he learned, later, how Murray, in the *Lady Nelson*, had crept through the narrow entrance to the bay only ten weeks earlier. The French contribution to the discovery is amusing, if not characteristic. Baudin, who commanded the French expedition of that period, told Flinders frankly that he saw no inlet as he came along the coast; but his editor, Freycinet, boldly put the bay on the map showing Baudin's discoveries, with the name "Baie Talleyrand."

Hume and Hovell can hardly even yet be forgiven for their deplorably bad taste in nomenclature. Filial piety may perhaps excuse Hume for wanting to label the greatest of Australian rivers with the name of his father; but only good luck saved the Goulburn from the infliction of bearing Hovell's name. Those first explorers, perhaps, had no chance of learning the native names of the rivers they crossed and the mountains they climbed, but it is also certain they had no touch of the historic, or artistic, sense which desires to preserve these names, if only for the antiquity which

slumbers in their syllables. "Werribee" is a characteristic aboriginal name worth preserving; but only by chance did that rivulet escape being called the "Arndel," a name with no other title to immortality except the circumstance that it belonged to Hovell's father-in-law. For the rest the names given show great literary poverty. We have the usual Muddy Creeks and Mount Disappointments to be found all over Australia. Any incident—the loss of a tool, the desire to please some small official, or to gratify some humble friend—explains half the names with which these explorers afflicted Australia.

Hume and Hovell did not, then, "discover" Port Phillip; the seamen were before them. They only explored a route by land to it. And it was Flinders's account of his visit to what he calls Station Peak—now known as the You Yangs—which enabled Hume, with his sure bushman's eye and logic, to be confident that the bay on whose waters they looked was not Western Port. Flinders tells how he gave the name of the "Indented Head" to that point on the western shore of the bay which still bears that name. He says: "At dawn we set off with three of the boat's crew for the higher part of the back hills called Station Peak. Our way was over a low plain where the water appeared frequently to lodge. We discovered small-blade grass, but the country was almost destitute of wood, and the soil was clay, and shallow. I left the ship's name on a scroll of paper, deposited on a small pile of stones on the top of the peak, and at three in the afternoon, May 1, reached the tent much fatigued, having walked more than twenty miles without finding a drop of water."

Hume did not find on the summit of the peak that "scroll of paper" left by Flinders twenty-four years before; but as he stared at the landscape from that point he recognised it from Flinders's description, and was sure that they had reached Port Phillip.

The results of Hume and Hovell's expedition were great and memorable. They not only brought the whole south-eastern part of Australia within reach of occupation; they showed it was worth while being occupied. They swept away, as with a breath, the black, obscuring fog of absurd guesses, and equally absurd "conclusions" by which the earlier explorers had dismissed the whole of this part of Australia from the possibility of human occupation. It is still nothing less than entertaining to read Oxley's verdict on all Australia south of, say, the Murrumbidgee. He is not content with saying once that the country was "uninhabitable and useless for all the purposes of civilised man"; he repeated the statement half a dozen times. He even claims to have "demonstrated it beyond a doubt." He seems to avenge himself for the hardships he was suffering at the moment by abusing everything that lay beyond the horizon to the south of him which he could not reach.

On June 21 he says: "For all practical purposes of civilised man the interior of this country westward of a certain meridian is uninhabitable, deprived as it is of wood, water, and grass. With respect to water it is impossible that any can be contained in such a country with such a soil as it is composed of." Only three days afterwards he writes: "The country to the southward is a desert, uninhabitable country, and useless for all

the purposes of civilised man." He denies the existence of any navigable rivers in this part of Australia. Now Oxley, it must be remembered, was the most scientific explorer Australia yet knew. His journal, published by Murray in 1820—a solid quarto, in big type, with broad margins and elaborate maps—is perhaps the most imposing bit of indigenous literature Australia, up to that date, had seen. And it was the result of Oxley's verdicts that all the territory to the south and west remained untouched by a settlement for years.

And yet beyond the horizon which Oxley defined as "a vast desert" is to-day a land of great cities, of thriving industries, of broad wheat-fields, of mines, and factories, and railways, of orchards and dairy farms. The "hopeless desert" of Oxley became the "Australia Felix" of Mitchell; but Hume and Hovell's expedition is the link betwixt the two expeditions, and explains the reversal of Oxley's dreadful verdict.

Hovell, in 1855, offered £100 towards the cost of erecting an obelisk showing all the names of the exploring party. That obelisk was never erected, but the names of the men who formed the expedition with Hume and Hovell are worth recording. There are "six prisoners, named Claude Bossawa, Henry Angell, James Fitzpatrick, Thomas Boyd, Samuel Bollard, and Ben Smith." Of these six, decidedly the most amusing and energetic character was Boyd. His daring and energy are clearly visible in the records of the expedition. He was the man who swam, cord in his mouth, across the Murrumbidgee with Hume; Favenc, in his *Explorers of Australia*, adds that Boyd was "the first white man to cross the Hume river, the Murray, swimming over with the

end of a line in his teeth." His "recollections" of the expedition, as published in Hume's narrative, are very amusing. It is possible still to hear, in what he says, the voice—loud, positive, and blunt—of the bushman who has gossiped by camp fires for half a century.

Boyd was the only survivor of the party—and eighty-six years old—in 1883. If anyone desired to realise the swift, tremendous growth of prosperous settlement in Australia he has only to note the fact here recorded. Only twenty-five years from the moment these lines were written (September 20, 1910), there still lived one of the first party of white men that crossed the Murray at Albury, and came through Victoria to Geelong Bay. At that moment the sole occupants of these rich territories were the kangaroo, the emu, and a few wandering families of blackfellows. To-day these once empty landscapes are occupied by one of the most energetic and prosperous communities of civilised men in the world, with Melbourne, a city of over half a million inhabitants, as its capital. If the ghost of Hume could visit the You Yangs summit and look from it afresh, he would see on one hand the roofs of Geelong, on the other the smoke of the factories of Melbourne. On every side lies a land of railways and gold-mines, of orchards and wheat-fields, where life is easier, the hours of labour shorter, the standard of living higher, and the average of wealth greater than in almost any other community under heaven. To have built so many cities and railways, opened so many mines, planted so many orchards, called into existence such rich herds and flocks within a space of time so brief, represents an energy of hand and brain and will nothing less than marvellous.

CHAPTER VI

THE PART OF THE FRENCH IN AUSTRALIAN EXPLORATION

"TRACED back to decisive causes," says Mr. Scott in his *Terre Napoléon*, "the ownership of Australia was determined on October 21, 1805, when the planks of the *Victory* were red with the life-blood of Nelson."

That the ownership of Australia to-day is linked to great historic events a century ago is an aspect of Australian history which most Australians forget, and of which they need to be reminded.

What was the part the French took in the discovery and exploration of Australia? The Spaniards, as we have seen, came first, with Quiros, in 1606; Tasman, the Dutchman, followed in 1642; Great Britain found its first representative in these waters with Dampier, in 1652; the French made their appearance with Bougainville, in 1766. But the Spaniard, the Dutchman, the Frenchman, have disappeared from the Australian landscape, and Australia is as much British as, say, Kent or Midlothian. But how does it come to pass that the seamen of other nations, who preceded the British in the discovery of Australia, and in the mapping of its shores, made no permanent mark on a continent so vast and rich, while the British have an unchallenged right to the whole?

1801–2 were the critical years in Australian history.

In July 1801, Flinders sailed from England in the *Investigator;* in May of the same year Baudin's ships reached Australia. Murray discovered Port Phillip in January 1802, the year of the Peace of Amiens; Flinders in September of the same year discovered Spencer's Gulf.

On the afternoon of April 8 the *Investigator* had been beating against head-winds off Kangaroo Island, when the look-out on the masthead reported a white object ahead. It was supposed to be a rock, but turned out to be the white topsails of a ship, and Flinders cleared his little craft for action in case of being attacked; for a strange ship in those lonely waters, at that period, was very likely to be an enemy. The stranger was a heavy-looking ship, with stumpy topmasts, and presently showed a French ensign. Flinders manœuvred so as to keep his broadside to the stranger, lest the flag of truce should be a deception; but presently he lowered a boat and went on board the ship. It proved to be *Le Géographe*, one of two French ships on an exploring expedition in the southern seas. She had lost sight of her consort, *Le Naturaliste*, in wild weather off Tasmania. The name of the bay off which this meeting took place —Encounter Bay—commemorates the incident. The two captains exchanged friendly greetings, and naturally talked about their common sea experiences, and the discoveries they had made. On the 9th the ships parted, Flinders sailing past King Island and Port Phillip, and then through Bass Strait to Sydney; Baudin retracing the coast already explored by Flinders.

Everyone remembers the cruel fortune that befell Flinders. In 1803 his own ship was wrecked; his second ship was condemned as unseaworthy, and he was given,

as we have already related, the *Cumberland*, a stumpy little sloop of only twenty-nine tons, in which to carry his shipwrecked company to England. The leaky and crazy little craft threatened to sink under their feet on the voyage, and Flinders put into Mauritius, where he was detained as a prisoner by the French Governor, Decaen, for six and a half years, and some of his charts were taken from him and detained permanently. In the meanwhile, Baudin pursued his voyage, which was almost as ill-fated as that of La Pérouse.

La Pérouse sailed from France in 1785, and his two ships made their appearance in Port Jackson on February 23, 1788, only a fortnight after Phillip had landed his first batch of convicts in Botany Bay. On March 10 La Pérouse and his consort sailed away into space, and were never heard of again. "They vanished, trackless, into blue immensity, and only some mournful, mysterious shadow of La Pérouse hovered long over all heads and hearts." In 1827 one of the East India Company's ships found at Manicolo, in the New Hebrides, the wreckage of the unfortunate Frenchmen. On some wild night the French ships were driven on the reef and pounded to matchwood. A few sailors succeeded in reaching the shore, only to perish, later, in an attempt to reach civilised lands.

Baudin's expedition sailed in October 1800. No money was spared on the expedition, or on his two ships. *Le Géographe* was a corvette of thirty guns, a fast sailer; *Le Naturaliste* was a store-ship, strongly built, but slow. The expedition had many French characteristics. It included artists, men of science, astronomers, zoologists, mineralogists. Its staff, nautical,

scientific, and artistic, consisted of sixty-nine persons, of whom seven died, twenty-eight were put on shore on account of serious illness, five abandoned the expedition for various causes, and only twenty-nine returned to France. Baudin may have been a decent sailor, but he had none of the gifts of a commander, and he had not learned the art of sea-travel as Flinders, or as Cook, had mastered it. He failed tragically to maintain the health of his crews. Scurvy raged amongst them. When on June 3, 1802, *Le Géographe* appeared off Port Jackson, scarcely a man was fit to haul a rope or go aloft. Out of 170 men only twelve were capable of any kind of duty; only two helmsmen could take their turn at the wheel. The Frenchmen could not muster sufficient energy to bring their ship into port, and a boat's crew of Flinders's blue-jackets, from the *Investigator*, had to be sent out to bring the French ship into Port Jackson. The British tars climbed the side of the afflicted Frenchman, a British officer took charge, a British seaman was sent to the helm, and the ship was brought to anchor in this way. Flinders, when in his sinking little sloop he reached Mauritius, was repaid very badly for the generous and energetic help he gave to Baudin's perishing crew off Port Jackson.

Baudin himself died in September 1803, on his return voyage, and, four years after, the first volume of the *Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes* was published by Péron and Freycinet. Flinders's *Voyage to Terra Australis* was published in 1814; the second volume of the *Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes* was published in 1815, the year of

Waterloo; and in the work it was asserted that the French had discovered Port Phillip. A vast stretch of the southern coast of Australia was claimed as "Terre Napoléon," and the whole coast-line was sprinkled with French names—Rivoli Bay, Cape Jaffa, Cape Ramilie, Guichen Bay, Golfe Joseph Bonaparte, Baie Louis, and Baie Hortense. Port Phillip was named Baie Napoléon; Western Port, Golfe Josephine. The charts of the Terre Napoléon, says Mr. Scott, in his work of that title, "look like a partial index to the Pantheon and Père la Chaise."

Now the actual coast-line which Baudin explored stretches from a point north-west of Cape Banks, on the South Australian coast, to the mouth of the river Murray and Encounter Bay; a stretch of about fifty leagues of sandy shore on which there is neither river, inlet, nor place of shelter. But on the strength of his performances on that tiny ribbon of coast-line, Baudin —or, rather, Péron and Freycinet, who, after his death, wrote the story of the voyage—claimed to have "discovered" the whole vast stretch of the southern coast of Australia, including Port Phillip, and they exercised the right of discoverers in labelling the whole coast-line with French names. Mr. Scott proves, with great clearness of knowledge, that Baudin never saw Port Phillip, or guessed its existence. He dismisses the theory, however, that Flinders's charts were pilfered and exploited in the interests of French fame; but he shows it to be certain that Péron and Freycinet had seen *some* chart—perhaps that of Murray—and they had accordingly plotted Port Phillip on the chart they published—and made a very bad business of it. The

chart itself proves that those who drew it had never seen Port Phillip Bay. A glance at it shows that it represents, not knowledge, but ignorance.

Did Napoleon at any time dream of creating a great French province under Australian skies? Most of the writers on the subject hold this to have been the case; else why did Napoleon, in the very year of the battle of Marengo, authorise the despatch of Baudin's expedition? His ships, curiously enough, reached Australia about the time of the battle of Copenhagen. Says Dr. Holland Rose:

"The unknown continent of Australia appealed to Napoleon's imagination, which pictured its solitudes transformed by French energy into a second fatherland. Bonaparte had 'early turned his eyes to that land.' He took a copy of Cook's voyages with him to Egypt, and no sooner was he firmly installed as First Consul than he 'planned with the Institute of France a great French expedition to New Holland.' It is represented that the Terre Napoléon maps show that 'under the guise of being an emissary of civilisation, Commodore Baudin was prepared to claim half the continent for France.'"

Now it is extremely probable that at the time of the Peace of Amiens, in 1802, Napoleon might have easily secured part, at least, of Australia for French occupation. Great Britain had the slightest possible hold on the Australian continent. The proportion of it which the English occupied at the time, says Mr. Scott in his *Terre Napoléon*, "was no more than a fly speck upon a window pane." The small portion of it she was using was only a convict settlement; and British statesmen were

curiously willing to surrender, when peace came, all the oversea possessions British seamen had won at the cost of their blood. What Great Britain gained in time of war during those years is only less wonderful than what she gave away when peace arrived. At the Peace of Amiens she gave away the Cape of Good Hope, Java, the whole of the West Indies, and the French settlements in India.

If Napoleon, with his eye for strategical points, had studied the whole situation in southern waters, he would, while holding Mauritius and Pondicherry, have seized Port Darwin; and these three points would have formed a triangle of strong places, and enabled the French to command the Indian Ocean. It is curious to know that the directors of the East India Company suspected, and feared, exactly this policy on the part of Napoleon; and they voted £600 towards the equipment of the *Investigator* before she sailed from England as a contribution to the defeat of French plans.

It is probable, however, that Napoleon's interest in Australia was purely scientific. Baudin's expedition had its inspiration in the Institute; instructions for the voyage were entrusted to a committee of the Institute, and the whole objective of the expedition was scientific, and not strategical. But if Napoleon had kept his crown, and his power, who can doubt that he would have made an attempt to seize Australia? It is this that makes Mr. Scott, with a flash of true historic insight, say that, "traced back to decisive causes, the ownership of Australia was determined on October 21, 1805, when the planks of the *Victory* were red with the life-blood of Nelson."

No doubt the charts published by Péron and Freycinet, showing the Australian coast scribbled over with French names, were meant to supply a plausible justification for the French ownership of part, at least, of Australia. But a continent is not to be annexed with a drop of ink. To quote Mr. Scott again:

"An empire is not like a piece of suburban property, based on title-deeds drawn by a family solicitor. Its validity is founded on forces—the forces of ships, armies, manhood, treaties, funds, national goodwill, sound government, commercial enterprise, all the forces that make for solidity, resistance, permanence. Freycinet's maps would have been of no more use to Napoleon in getting a footing in Australia than a postage stamp would be in shifting one of the pyramids."

The French, it cannot be denied, had a great opportunity. Baudin, sailing along the southern coast, confined himself, as we have seen, to putting French names, like so many labels, on one headland or bay after another, names that have long since faded and been forgotten. If he had been of a more resolute genius he might have planted the French flag, and even little patches of actual settlement, along that coast, and in this way have annexed the richest districts on the southern edge of the continent. Great Britain in 1804 certainly would not have wasted a squadron in order to assert her title to the whole of a vast, dim, remote, scarcely known continent like Australia. The tricolour in that case might have flown over Victoria and South Australia: Adelaide might have been the Paris, and Melbourne the Marseilles, of the Pacific.

In later years, British statesmen took a more imperial view of the ownership of Australia than did British diplomatists in 1802. During his tenure of the Colonial Office, Lord John Russell tells the story of how a gentleman attached to the French Government called upon him and asked him how much of Australia was claimed as the dominion of Great Britain. Says Lord John: "I answered, 'The whole,' and with that answer he went away." Mr. Scott, however, shows that Napoleon III evidently had his own secret designs about Australia:

"One day the British Foreign Minister received, from a source of which we know nothing—but the Foreign Office in the Palmerstonian epoch was exceedingly well informed—a communication which, having read, he did not deposit among the official documents at Downing Street, but carefully sealed up and placed among his own private papers. His biographer, Sir Spencer Walpole, tells us all that is at present known about this mysterious piece of writing. 'There is still among Lord John's papers,' he says, 'a simple document which purports to be a translation of a series of confidential questions issued by Napoleon III on the possibility of a French expedition, secretly collected in different ports, invading, conquering, and holding Australia. How the paper reached the Foreign Office, what credit was attached to it, what measures were suggested by it, there is no evidence to show. This only is certain. Lord John dealt with it as he occasionally dealt with confidential papers which he did not think it right to destroy, but which he did not wish to be known. He enclosed it in an envelope,

sealed it with his own seal, and addressed it to himself. It was so found after his death.'"

Napoleon III, in 1853, annexed New Caledonia, in 1866 he attempted to establish French influence in Mexico, and that he looked with desire on Australia cannot be doubted.

Mr. Scott claims to have proved "that the people of no portion of the British Empire have greater reason to be grateful for the benefits conferred by the naval strength maintained by the mother country, during the past one hundred years, than have those who occupy Australia. Their country has indeed been, in a special degree, the nursling of sea-power. By naval predominance, and that alone, the way has been kept clear for the unimpeded development, on British constitutional lines, of a group of flourishing states forming 'one continent-isle.' whose bounds are 'the girdling seas alone.'"

CHAPTER VII

THE PUZZLE OF AUSTRALIAN RIVERS

THE expedition of Hume and Hovell had done more than open a new province to settlement in Australia; it had put a more cheerful complexion on the whole geography of the continent. The country to the south of the Murrumbidgee was *not* "useless for all the purposes of civilised man," an arid desert where no sheep could graze, and on which no household roof could ever cast its shade. Settlement in Australia was suddenly irradiated with new tints of hope.

But the "puzzle" of the rivers remained a puzzle. The Lachlan and the Macquarie, the only streams of any size yet discovered, reversed all the known laws of flowing streams. They ran, not from the centre to the coast, but from the coast to the centre, as if they were seeking some mysterious Mediterranean, a great inland Australian sea.

In 1828 something more than scientific curiosity, or the spreading impulse of settlement, created a desire to attack the problem of the rivers afresh. The drought of 1813 had sent Blaxland and his companions across the Blue Mountains; and in 1828 a still worse drought was afflicting the Australian settlements. It lay like a flame on hill and plain, and it scorched like a flame. For nearly two years no beneficent rain-cloud cooled

the white heat of the Australian sky, and no whisper of falling rain kissed the Australian soil. The pastures were turned to dust; the flocks were dying with hunger; the crops were withered when half grown. But this cruel and wasting drought, which was for the settlement a disaster, was for the business of exploration an inspiration. As with the prick of some spear of flame it spurred the responsible leaders of the little colony to attempt to reach some new stretch of territory, with pastures as yet untouched. Oxley, in 1817, had been stopped on both the Lachlan and the Macquarie by vast stretches of shallow swamps. The sustained drought of 1827–1828 must have turned these into dry plains; and to reach the unknown sea—or, at all events, to determine whether it existed—would now, if ever, be possible. And for this adventure Darling, who was then Governor, had the insight—or the good luck—to put his hand on Sturt, a captain in the 39th, then acting in Sydney as his military secretary and brigade-major. And in the long procession of Australian explorers there is no more gallant, or more absolutely blameless and admirable, figure than that of Charles Sturt.

He was born in India, but was of a Scottish border family; and if his Indian childhood fitted him to survive the fierce heats of Australian droughts and deserts, his strong-fibred Scottish stock gave him an energy, both of body and of character, which enabled him to endure toils such as few men have ever known. At eighteen he was an ensign in the 39th, and fought in the Pyrenees under Hill. It was a stern, if noble school; for in the whole Peninsular War there were

no harder marches, and no more stubborn fighting, than on the wind-blown flanks and in the gloomy defiles of the Pyrenees, where French and British wrestled together during the bitter campaigns of 1813–1814. And in those campaigns, from Sauroren to Toulouse, Sturt played a gallant part.

The Peninsula, specially in its later campaigns, developed soldiers of many types, and some, at least, of a very rare and fine quality. Many of Wellington's officers were, no doubt, like Shakespeare's soldier, "full of strange oaths," "sudden and quick in quarrel, seeking the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth." But there were others who were not only as brave as their own swords, but were gentle, chivalrous, patient, humane. Hill himself had some of the qualities of this type; so had the three Napiers. Colborne, who with the 52nd shattered the Old Guard at Waterloo, was perhaps the best example of this flower of good soldiership; and Sturt belonged to Colborne's school. He was transparently simple and straightforward, sweet in temper, gentle in speech, generous almost to a fault, as compassionate as a woman, and yet as daring a soldier as ever rode in a charge.

He was not a bushman like Hume, or a scientist like Oxley, but he had finer qualities than either, and amongst them was a real genius for leadership. No quarrel ever broke out in any of his explorations. And though he penetrated further into absolutely unknown country than any other Australian explorer, and came into contact with more of its natives, yet when he died there did not lie on his conscience the sin of shedding one drop of aboriginal blood. His

contributions to Australian geography were splendid. He solved the two great perplexities of the continent, the problem of the great eastern water system and the twin puzzle of the true character of the eastern interior of Australia. It may be added that he created a new school of explorers, such as Eyre and MacDouall Stuart. He had a fair equipment of scientific knowledge; and his journals, with their simplicity, their limpid clearness, and their unconscious charm, are a reflex of his own fine character.

Sturt was allowed *carte blanche* in all the preparations for the expedition, and he showed the qualities of a good leader in the men he chose for his party. Hume was chosen for his fine gifts as a bushman; Harris, Sturt's soldier-servant, two soldiers—Hopkinson and Fraser—and eight convicts made up the rest of the party; and Sturt was able to knit this somewhat odd human group into a loyal, contented, and most efficient company of adventurers. The equipment included fifteen horses, two draught and eight pack bullocks, with a small boat rigged up on a wheel carriage. Sturt was allowed to make his own list of weapons and supplies, and he did this so economically that the whole cost of the expedition amounted to £209, 15*s.* 9*d.* Never was an exploration conducted in more severely economical fashion!

The expedition started on November 10, 1828, and by December 20 the party reached Mount Harris, where Oxley had encamped in 1818. The trenches which had been cut round his tents were still perfect, the marks of the fire-places could be recognised. There was the debris of the camp, the half-burnt planks of

a boat, an old trunk, some clinched and rusty nails. "A reflection arose to my mind," says Sturt, "on examining these decaying vestiges of a former expedition, whether I should be more fortunate than the leader of it. . . . My eye turned instinctively to the north-west, and the view extended over an apparently endless forest." Oxley had been stopped by a landscape of marshes, but what marsh could survive the drought that burned like a white flame in the very atmosphere, and turned river-beds themselves into mere threads of dust? Not oceans of reeds, but a Sahara of sand—sometimes so hot that a match allowed to fall upon it ignited—lay before Sturt.

Sturt pushed forward from Mount Harris, and camped the first night amongst the dry and rustling sea of reeds. The next day he followed the course of the Macquarie, when, he says, "our course was suddenly and most unexpectedly checked. The channel, which had promised so well, without change in the breadth or depth of its bed, ceased altogether, and while we were yet lost in astonishment at so abrupt a termination, the boat grounded." Minute search discovered two tiny threads of water, stealing without definite banks through the roots of the reeds, sometimes ankle-deep, sometimes a mere dampness in the soil. Hume, taking a wider sweep, found, twelve miles to the north, a winding thread of running water, evidently the true channel of the river; but this in turn was lost in reeds and shallows. "From the extreme flatness of the country," says Sturt, "I should have been led to believe that the Macquarie would never again assume the form of a river"; but the vast expanse of dry and rustling

reeds extended in a direction which promised a junction with the Castlereagh.

Hume was despatched to scout in the NE.; Sturt took a line leading to the NW. On the second day Sturt found himself on the edge of a waterless plain, and the flight of a pigeon led him to a small puddle of rain-water. "I thanked Providence," says Sturt, "for this bounty." For six days, in spite of blinding heat, Sturt pushed on. "In the creeks," he says, "weeds had grown and withered, and grown again. . . . The large forest-trees were drooping, many were dead. The emus, with outstretched necks, gasping for breath, searched the channels of the rivers for water in vain. The native dog, so thin he could hardly walk, seemed to implore some merciful hand to despatch him." On the seventh day Sturt turned back. "The space I traversed," he wrote, "is unlikely to become the haunt of civilised man, or will become so in isolated spots, as the chain of connection with a more fertile country, if such a country exists, to the westward."

On January 6, Hume rejoined the camp, but he brought no more cheerful report. The vanished river remained undiscovered. On January 13 they left the marshes and pushed westwards. Sturt, unarmed, was riding ahead with Hume when they surprised a hunting party of aboriginals. At sight of the horsemen all ran away but one, who wore a cap of emu feathers:

"He stood looking at us for a moment, and then, very deliberately, dropped from the tree to the ground. I advanced towards him, but he darted away. Fearful lest he had gone to collect his tribe, I rode quickly back for my gun to support Mr. Hume. On my

return, the native was standing about twenty paces from Mr. Hume, at whom (as being the nearest) the savage, on seeing me approach, immediately poised his spear. Hume then unslung and presented his carbine; but as it was evident that my appearance had startled the savage, I pulled up, and he immediately lowered his weapon. His coolness and courage surprised me. He had evidently taken man and horse for one animal, and as long as Hume kept his seat, the native remained upon his guard; but on seeing the rider dismount, he stuck his spear into the ground and came up. When we explained our search for water, he pointed to the west. He gave information in a frank, manly way, and when the party passed, he stepped back without the least embarrassment to avoid the animals. I am sure he was a very brave man, and I left him with the most favourable impression."

On January 21 they came upon what is now known as the Bogan, but was named by Sturt New Year's Creek. Up to that time the party had suffered greatly from lack of water. What they got was scraped up from small puddles in which were occasionally putrid frogs. When boiled it would leave a sediment nearly equal to half its bulk. Sturt afterwards told a friend that more than once, on finding a little mud, he squeezed it through his handkerchief to moisten his mouth. The water, so slimy as to hang in strings between the fingers, was so putrid that the horses refused it.

On February 1 the party suddenly stumbled upon a great river, with banks from forty to forty-five feet high. The wide stream, some eighty yards broad, was

covered with pelicans and wild-fowl, the overhanging trees were rich in shade and vast in bulk, the native paths running down on either side to the water were like well-trodden roads. For a moment the whole party stood gaping with astonishment at this strange, stately, beautiful stream, then with shouts they dashed down the banks and plunged into the stream, stooping to drink. Sturt was watching them from the bank, and, to his amazement, saw his men lift their faces from the water with every sign of disgust. It was as salt as brine! The cattle waded into the river and soaked their bodies in it, but could not drink it; and, with a navigable stream flowing at their feet, the party might have perished of thirst had not Hume discovered a pond of fresh water some distance from the bank of the stream.

To-day the Darling is fresh water. How did it happen to be salt as sea-water when Sturt's men splashed into it? At first Sturt accepted the saltness of the water as proof that it was a tidal stream, running into some great sea, and he watched the banks closely for any sign of a tide. He tells how, standing on the banks at sunset, and watching the water-fowl and the leaping-fish, he found in the very wealth of winged and scaly life a proof that some vast ocean was near. But there was no pulse of sea-tides discoverable in the river, and Sturt soon guessed that the saltness of its stream was due to long-continued drought, which gave the brine springs in the banks the chance of changing the whole stream to their own bitter flavour.

For four days Sturt moved along the banks of this

strange river—he had named it the Darling—but on the 5th he halted. The river had brine springs in its very bed; the last pond of fresh water was eighteen miles behind. It was doubtful, if they pushed further on, whether another supply would be discovered. Only a pint of fresh water remained in their barrel; the horses were almost worn out, and Sturt reluctantly, but wisely, turned back, meeting many natives, but always, with his exquisite tact and humanity, keeping on friendly terms with them. At one native camp he counted no less than seventy huts, each capable of holding from twelve to fifteen men, and all fronting the same point of the compass—the north-west. In one hut were two beautifully made nets, ninety yards long; trenches were made round the huts to keep out rain. They were plainly aboriginals of a higher type than can be found in the continent to-day.

The party fell back to Mount Harris, and found the vast reed-beds in its neighbourhood all in flames. Sturt's camp, however, though it had been attacked, was safe, and a relief party with supplies had come up. On March 7 Sturt struck camp again, and made for the Castlereagh, sending the relief party back to Bathurst. The Castlereagh was reached on the 10th: the bed of the river, at least, was there still, but the stream itself had vanished. They pushed on beside the channel of the dead river, exploring with tireless patience its network of tributary creeks, and often at the point of perishing for lack of water. Sturt and Hume every day rode ahead of the slowly trudging expedition, looking for water, usually looking in vain. For forty-five miles the bed of the Castle-

reagh was absolutely dry. They struck the Darling again on March 29, ninety miles above the point at which they had first reached it. There were the same steep banks and lofty timber, the same wide reaches of flowing water, alive with fish; but it was water as salt as ever.

Sturt and Hume pushed on to the north-west, a long day's ride, and during that whole day not a drop of water, not a blade of grass, was seen. "Had we picked up a stone as indicating our approach to high land," says Sturt, "I would have gone on. Had there been a break in the country, or even a change in the vegetation; but we had left all traces of the natives behind us, and this seemed a desert they never entered, that not even a bird inhabited. . . . None who had not like me traversed the interior at such a season would believe the state of the country over which I had wandered. . . . I had seen rivers cease to flow before me, and sheets of water disappear. . . . So long had the drought continued that the vegetable kingdom was almost annihilated." The party fell back, but on their way traced, and followed, a small channel or depression, and ascertained it to be the outflow of the Macquarie marshes. The "mystery" of the Macquarie was at last solved; or, rather, the Macquarie itself disappeared. No river existed. All that remained was that ill-defined tiny depression by which, when it did flow, it reached the Darling. The vast reedy marshes are drained by a creek which connects them with a chain of ponds; these fell into the Castlereagh, and all three thus joined the Darling.

But if Sturt had solved one mystery, he left

behind him another. Whence came the Darling, and whither did it flow? Did it in turn, like the Macquarie and the Lachlan, disappear in a landscape of reeds? "We left the interior," says Sturt, "in a still more deplorable state than when we entered it, and it is certain that unless rain fell in three weeks all communication with the Darling would be cut off."

Sturt, it will be seen, had not found the long-sought central sea—the "Australian Caspian"; but he had traced to their last drop the Macquarie, the Bogan, and the Castlereagh, and he discovered the Darling, evidently the main channel of the great western watershed. All this, however, only raised the still bigger problem, Where did the Darling run? and to solve this problem was the business of his second expedition which started on November 3, 1829. Sturt's aim was to strike the Darling at some point far below the part already explored; and it was in looking for the Darling that he stumbled on the Murray, and achieved the great feat of his life by following its course down to the sea.

He proposed to make the Murrumbidgee his starting-point, and to follow its stream, in the expectation that somewhere, and under some conditions, it would intersect the Darling. He began his preparations in September 1829, the chief feature in his equipment being a whale-boat—or rather the pieces that go to make a whale-boat—all ready to be put together. It was a substantial craft, capable of carrying two and a half tons of provisions. To prepare for the risk of having to sail on another river of salt water like the Darling, Sturt took with him a small still. His party, too, was

well armed, as he found that the natives were in greater numbers, and more dangerous, than any previous explorer had imagined. Hume declined to join him, and so missed fame. His place was taken by George MacLeay, later Sir George MacLeay, a lad of twenty. He was for Sturt more a companion than an assistant. His soldier-servant Harris, Hopkinson and Fraser, two soldiers who were with him in the Macquarie expedition, joined him. Clayton, a convict, also one of the Macquarie group, with two new convicts, Mulholland and Macnamee, completed the staff, making a party in all of eight. A relief party was to meet the adventurers on their return, and a vessel was to wait in St. Vincent's Gulf, to pick them up if they reached the sea.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST BOAT ON THE MURRAY

On November 3, 1829, almost exactly a year after the departure of his first expedition, Sturt started on his new adventure. A generous farmer presented the party with eight fine wethers, a very useful contribution to its equipment. On November 23 they reached the Murrumbidgee, and the contrast betwixt its swift-running waters, eddying in foam past the rocks, and the lazy, furtive current of the Lachlan and the Macquarie, was very striking. They followed the river till December 1, when the country changed. The landscape was flat, the river crept, a muddy stream, betwixt reedy banks. The landscape stretched westward to the horizon as flat as a billiard-board. Was the Murrumbidgee, like its sister rivers, to end in the anti-climax of a swamp? "Our road," says Sturt, "was over as melancholy a track as ever man travelled. The plains to the north and north-west bounded the horizon, not a tree of any kind was visible upon them. It was equally open to the south, and it appeared as if the river was decoying us into a desert."

At one point Sturt, hearing from the natives reports of bullock tracks to the NNW., rode nearly thirty miles in that direction. These, he guessed, were the

traces left by Oxley's Lachlan expedition; his own and Oxley's bearings almost exactly tallied, and he wished to connect surveys; but the tracks of which the natives talked could not be discovered. Sturt crossed what he calls "a creek," creeping slowly through reed-grown flats, and in this way hit the actual outlet of the Lachlan—its junction with the Murrumbidgee—solving one more geographical problem.

But by this time the Murrumbidgee threatened to fail him. Every day wore a more gloomy aspect. Vast stretches of polygonum stretched away, like a dark vegetable sea, to the horizon; the ground became so rotten that the teams could not pull the carts; and on the 25th MacLeay, who was ahead, sent a man back with the news that the river was no longer to be discovered. This, however, proved to be a mistake, for, turning sharp to the right, Sturt hit the Murrumbidgee again. Its waters were now turbid and deep, the current swift.

It was Sturt's fate to be always scorched with heat; droughts pursued him, ran before him, hung about him; and by this time—when he was struggling through vast stretches of polygonum—"the wind," he says "was blowing as if through a furnace from the north and north-east. The dust was flying in clouds so as to render it almost suffocating to remain exposed to it."

It was plain that the drays could not be taken further, and Sturt made a daring choice. He would build his whale-boat, send home the drays, and take to the river. The separate parts of the little craft which had been dragged across a distance of 440

miles were taken out and laboriously put together. A tree was felled, a saw-pit rigged up, and a rough boat of smaller size was built; and all this was done in a week. Sturt sent back despatches to the Governor: "I am obliged to abandon my cattle," he says, "and have taken to the boats. Where I shall wander to, God only knows. I have little doubt, however, that I shall ultimately make the coast. Where do the Hume and the Hovell (Goulburn) and the other streams flow to?" It was to solve this problem that Sturt was about to commit himself to that unknown current, running through what seemed a limitless plain of reeds.

Sturt chose six men to accompany MacLeay and himself, the three soldiers—Hopkinson, Harris, and Fraser—and three convicts, Mulholland, Clayton, and Macnamee. The rest of the party were to fall back on Goulburn Plains, form a camp, and remain there till Sturt returned. At seven o'clock on the morning of January 7, 1830, Sturt and his little company started on what was to be a memorable voyage. It was a plunge into the unknown. The tiny craft which carried them was twenty-five feet eight inches long, and about five feet broad. The supply of stores was scanty, part being carried in the boat that towed behind them.

There was a steady current in the river, and with only two oars the boats crept on at a reasonable pace. At a distance of less than fifteen miles from the depot they passed the junction of the Lachlan. The stream at this point narrowed, it was thick with snags, and on the second day the skiff they were towing was im-

paled on one of these and sank. Two days were spent in recovering what of the sunken stores they could, then they moved on again, the channel growing ever narrower, though the stream was fed at short intervals by tributary creeks.

On the afternoon of the 13th the current grew more rapid; the stream was pricked with sunken timber, and the voyagers plunged into darkness under closely arching trees. "On January 14," says Sturt, "we rose with great doubts lest we should thus early witness the wreck of the expedition." The morning passed: at noon there was a brief rest, then the boats started again. The quickening current seemed to whisper of some coming crisis, and the men sat looking eagerly ahead. What would the next curve in the banks reveal? "At three P.M.," says Sturt, "Hopkinson called out that we were approaching a junction, and in less than a minute we were hurried into a broad and noble river." With such force was the boat shot out of the Murrumbidgee that it was carried almost to the bank opposite its mouth. Here was a great stream, such as never yet the eyes of white men in Australia had looked on. It had an average width of 350 feet, a depth of from twelve to twenty feet; and the long stretch of river offered a splendid vista. "We continued," says Sturt, "to gaze in silent astonishment on the capacious channel we had entered, and when we looked for that by which we had entered it we could hardly believe that this gloomy outlet concealed the river . . . whose springs rose in snow clad mountains."

Sturt felt sure that the key to the river system of

the whole south-east of Australia was at last in his grasp. He floated on a stream which would carry him to the sea! This must be the great river which Hovell and Hume had crossed in 1823; and as Sturt was 300 miles from their track, it was probable that the Goulburn and the Ovens had joined the Hume, or, as it was henceforth to be called, the Murray, so named by Sturt from Sir George Murray, then the head of the Colonial Department.

On January 17, as the little expedition was about to camp, a great company of aboriginals made their appearance on the opposite bank, fully armed and painted for battle. But Sturt, with his usual patient tact, succeeded in establishing friendly relations with them. Each day some new group of blacks made their appearance on one bank or the other, armed with shield and spear, and raced along with the boat. At one point the natives on the further bank crossed, joined the band on the side where Sturt had camped, and, with loud beating of shields and spears, and dreadful yells, threatened an attack. Sturt and MacLeay walked coolly down to them, and by the help of long-continued and friendly pantomime got into peaceful relations with them. They were as impressionable as children, and as frolicsome; and, says Sturt, "MacLeay's extreme good humour made a favourable impression on them. I still picture him joining in their wild song. They named him Rundi, and pressed him to show his side, as if the original Rundi had been killed by a spear-wound in that place." A native of commanding stature and mighty limbs volunteered, with three of his fellows, to act as escort, and to that particular black-

fellow the whole expedition was twice over to owe its escape from destruction.

Sturt by this time guessed he must be approaching the junction of the Darling with the Murray, and kept vigilant watch. On January 23 the boat was under sail, running fast down a long reach of the river. At the end was a projecting bend of land, rich with the shade of trees; beneath was a great crowd of blacks —Sturt reckoned not less than 600 in number—all armed and painted for war, and lifting up a wild clamour of shouts. Sturt coolly steered straight for the bank. "The natives," he says, "some with ribs, thighs, and faces daubed with white, others with red and yellow ochre, held their spears ready to hurl." An ominous silence had fallen upon them. In another moment a tempest of flying spears would have broken upon the boat, but Sturt put his helm to starboard, and sailed past the crowd. The natives ran along the bank, flinging themselves into extravagant attitudes and working themselves into a frenzy of shouts. The river ahead was fast shallowing; a huge sandbank thrust itself almost across the channel, and on the tip of this the blacks had gathered—a huge mass, in a state of warlike fury.

A fight seemed inevitable. Sturt told his men their only chance of escape depended on their coolness:

"I desired that, after the first volley, MacLeay and three of the men would defend the boat with bayonets only, while I, Harris, and Hopkinson, being more used to guns, would keep up the fire. No shot was to be fired till after I had discharged both barrels. As we neared the sandbank, I stood up and made signs to the

natives to desist, but without success." Sturt now cocked and levelled his gun. "A few seconds more would have closed the life of the nearest savage. But at that very moment—my hand on the trigger, my eye along the barrel—MacLeay called out that other blacks had appeared on the left bank. Turning round, I saw four men at the top of their speed. The foremost, when just ahead of the boat, threw himself from a considerable height into the water. He struggled across to the sandbank, and in an incredibly short time confronted the savage at whom I had aimed. Seizing him by the throat, and pushing him back, with all who were in the water, he trod its margin with vehement agitation. Now pointing to the boat, then shaking his clenched hand in the face of the most forward, he would stamp with passion; his voice at first clear and loud, now lost in hoarse murmurs. Our own feelings may be imagined; they cannot be described. So wholly were we absorbed that the boat, left to drift at pleasure, struck upon a shoal that reached across the river."

This friendly native who appeared so opportunely was the huge black who had shown himself so friendly when Sturt's boat first shot into the stream of the Murray.

As they pushed the boat off, a break in the opposite bank showed itself, clearly the mouth of a new stream, and Sturt turned the boat's head into the opening. The current ran strongly, and the river kept a breadth of over 100 yards, with a depth of twelve feet, flowing between grassy banks overhung by fine trees. It was the Darling, and Sturt hoisted the Union Jack, while the

whole eight adventurers stood up in the boat and gave three cheers. Little could Sturt have dreamed when, more than a year before, he had turned back from the salt and shrunken Darling at a point 300 miles distant, that he would meet the river again at its junction with the Murray, a stream so fair and stately.

Sturt now pushed steadily on. His stores were shrinking. There were plenty of fish in the river, but the stomachs of the men turned against them as a constant diet. The blacks were numerous. Each tribe had a strictly limited territory, but messengers ran ahead from one tribe to the other, so that almost every day Sturt and his men had to make terms with some new company of blacks. They were friendly, but inconvenient: "With each new tribe," he says, "we were in some measure obliged to submit to be pulled about and fingered over. They would measure our hands and feet with their own, count our fingers, feel our faces, besmearing our shirts with grease and dirt."

Below the Darling the river swung to the south-west. The heat grew oppressive. The country sometimes sank into mere alluvial flats, sometimes it consisted of stretches of arid desert. On January 28 the boat was running under steep banks rising at least 100 feet straight from the stream, and having the most beautiful columnar structure, making a façade, as of Corinthian pillars and capitals. Sometimes they showed like petrified waterfalls; elsewhere they resembled the time-worn battlements of a feudal castle.

At length there was a change; the weather grew stormy, there crept the smell and taste of the sea

into the strong winds which blew, though on January 28 Sturt's calculations showed they were still 115 miles from the coast, and considerably to the south of St. Vincent's Gulf. On the 29th they had been twenty-two days on the river, and had little but flour left to eat. On February 3 the boat turned into what is now known as the Great Bend of the Murray. They found themselves running almost due south; the river was wider than ever, the stream broke at the foot of banks like sea-cliffs, and with the shock of sea-waves. Sturt day by day sat in the boat, a sheet of paper and compass before him, and marked not only the line of the river, but every change of stream and bank, every glimpse of tributary and creek. Seagulls were now recognised, and on the 5th, sixty miles below the bend, a south-west gale sent a heavy swell up the river and drenched the rowers with spray.

On the 9th Sturt found the river opening into a beautiful lake, and he landed. "We had at length," he says, "arrived at the termination of the Murray." The western ranges sank to the south, but the north ended abruptly in a high mountain, the Mount Lofty of Captain Flinders. West of that Sturt knew was St. Vincent's Gulf, where a ship was waiting for them. Beyond was a bold headland, and to the south-west, through a strait between this headland and an opposite projection, there was visible the clear and open sea.

But as he looked, Sturt felt a pang of disappointment. The lake was plainly little influenced by tides, and that seemed to prove that it was hardly in direct touch with the sea. Was it possible that a navigable river, such as they had travelled on for so many days, ended in a

mere trap; that having come so near the sea, they could not break through to it?

The problem was soon to be solved. On the afternoon of February 9 Sturt turned the stem of his boat towards the lake, but a strong south-west wind compelled them to land on the eastern shore till the gale had blown itself out. At four o'clock next morning, long before sunrise, the party re-embarked, a friendly wind carrying them to the WSW. Presently they found the water in which they were sailing was brackish. On rounding a point a fine stretch of water curving under the ranges gave the promise of a run to the open sea. All faces grew bright at the prospect. But presently the water shallowed, and the party had to land once more on the western shore. Starting again, and steering south-west, they ran past a rocky island, and struck the channel now known as the Goolwa. They camped that night under the full moon, with the roar of the ocean in their ears, a sound that seemed full of hope. If they could reach the sea a ship was waiting for them.

In the dawn of February 11 they started early, but their course was barred by shallows; when the tide fell, it left exposed long stretches of wet sand, across which it was hopeless to draw a boat. Beyond them, not more than two and a half miles, the sea was distinctly visible. At high water they dragged the boat over mud-flats for a quarter of a mile, till darkness fell. Sturt and MacLeay, with Fraser, then crossed the hummocks and reached the seashore. "We had struck the south coast," says Sturt, "deep in the bight of Encounter Bay, Cape Jervis bearing by compass S. 81 degrees W., distant from nine to ten leagues."

The whole company by this time had gathered on the beach, and enjoyed themselves bathing and gathering cockles; but Sturt was debating, with a touch of bitter disappointment, the whole situation: their boat was so near the sea and yet could not reach it:

"To the right," he says, "thundered the heavy surf; to the left echoed the voices of the natives, while through the bush their large fires blazed to the very end of the channel. While the men were enjoying their kettleful of cockles, MacLeay and I were anxiously weighing over what remained of the provisions. Flour and tea, with six pounds of sugar, were the only articles left, so the task was not a long one. Nor had we sufficient of these supplies to last till we should reach Wantabadgery, where first we might expect relief. Thus our circumstances were really critical."

The mouth of the channel was defended by a double line of breakers, dangerous to face except in calm summer weather, and from one end to the other of Encounter Bay the stretch of white foam was unbroken. The Murray, in brief, obeyed the exasperating law of all Australian rivers yet discovered: it ended in a fiasco. It was a river without a mouth. The Lachlan and the Macquarie terminated their existence in swamps; the Murray—though for 1800 miles a navigable river—expired at last in a lake, through which it trickled to the sea only by what Sturt calls "an impregnable and useless channel."

Sturt could not hope to reach the relief ship, waiting somewhere in St. Vincent's Gulf; yet the attempt to row back up the Murray might well have seemed hopeless. His men were weak from fatigue and

poverty of diet; their stock of provisions was scanty, and it was calculated that only by pulling up-stream, day after day, the same distance they had covered when running with the current, would their provisions last till they reached the Murrumbidgee. To reduce the rations—already shrunk to three-quarters of a pound of flour a day and a quarter of a pound of tea a week—was impossible, in view of the physical toil of struggling for thirty-three days against a swift current. Any trivial accident—a leak, a splintered plank, a rise in the river—would be fatal.

But Sturt, somehow, had the art of infusing his own gallant spirit into others. His men accepted—if not with cheerfulness, yet with dogged resolution—the decision to retrace the long thirty-three days' run down the Murray; and, with a touch of real chivalry, they refused to touch the remaining six pounds of sugar, which they insisted, with rough courtesy, should be reserved for the sole use of Sturt and MacLeay.

On February 12, 1830, they began their return journey. A south-west breeze carried them across the lake, and up the lower reaches of the Murray, so that by the 16th they had gained a day on the time covered in the advance. But soon the wind failed; their toil hardened. The river, too, had fallen, so that in many places they had to haul their boat over the shallows. The journey began each day at sunrise, and the men pulled till seven or nine o'clock at night. Sturt's minutely accurate chart was not only an invaluable guide, it was a challenge to the men. It showed them, each hour, whether they were gaining or losing on the distances covered in the run down the river.

On February 23 the boat ran upon a snag. It would have been sunk, but that a piece of the branch broke off and remained in the side, so that they were able to pull to the bank and repair the damage. The blacks were as numerous as ever, and sometimes less friendly than when they first saw the whites. In the shallows they would press so close to the boat that the oars struck their legs. Only once, however, was a spear thrown at the labouring crew. The heat grew intense, the strength of the party sank; but, says Sturt, "the men, though falling asleep at their oars, never grumbled." Perhaps the crisis of the return voyage was reached on March 7, a morning dark with clouds and bitter with storms of rain. Before them was the worst rapid in the river.

"I knew not how we should surmount," he writes, "such an obstacle. We had not strength to pull up it, and our ropes were not long enough to reach to the shore. The only alternative was to get into the water and haul up the boat by main force. In our efforts we got into the middle of the channel; and, up to our armpits in water, only kept our position by means of the rocks. So strong was the current that, had we relaxed for an instant, we should have lost all the ground we had gained. Just at this moment we perceived that, quite unawares to us, a large tribe of natives with their spears had lined both banks. Never were we so utterly in their power, or so defenceless. The hard rain rendered our firelocks useless; and, had the savages attacked us, we must have been helplessly slaughtered. Nothing therefore remained for us but to continue our exertions. To get the boat into still water only one

strong effort was needed, but that effort was beyond our strength, and we stood in the stream powerless and exhausted. The natives meanwhile watched us with earnest attention. At length one of them sitting close to the water called to us, and we recognised the deep voice of our former deliverer."

His tall, stalwart figure was recognised, and at his bidding the blacks laid hold of the boat and pushed it up the rapid to the deep water beyond. Twice this huge, stern-looking, but friendly black had discharged the office of an earthly providence for Sturt's party. Says Sturt: "It was certainly very remarkable that the same influential savage to whom we had already owed our safety, should again have befriended us at this crisis."

On March 16 the narrow, snag-choked mouth of the Murrumbidgee was reached. It was fifty-five days since the boat had broken out of that tiny gap into the Murray. For Sturt's weary and hunger-wasted crew it was now a door of hope. But the stream of the Murrumbidgee was shrunken; its bed was more thickly sown than ever with rocks and snags; and, says Sturt, "so thin were the boat's planks that a blow against any one of them by the branches that threatened her must have rent her asunder from stem to stern." That misfortune, however, was escaped, and presently a swan was sighted and shot. It gave the crew the first mouthful of meat they had tasted for many days.

The blacks on the Murrumbidgee were as numerous as those on the Murray, and much more formidable, and the narrowness of the stream increased the chances

of a conflict. On the night of the 23rd, Harris, who was doing sentry-duty over the sleeping camp, roused Sturt with the news that "the blacks were coming." Sturt went out, and peered through the darkness, and could see in the gloom the crouching figures, spears in hand. "The blacks are close to me, sir," said Harris. "Shall I fire?" "How far?" said Sturt. "Within ten yards, sir." "Then fire," said Sturt. The red flash of his musket lit up the darkness. "Well, Harris," said Sturt, "did you kill your man?" "No, sir," he replied; "I thought you had repented, so I fired between the two." Harris was a remarkably good shot; he did not kill because he knew this would distress his master. Sir Charles Napier's comment on this incident is worth quoting:

"How noble do the characters of Captain Sturt and his party appear! The soldier Harris, alone outside of the tent—in the desert—at night; a whole tribe armed and creeping upon him through the dusk—within ten yards of him—a dozen spears, for aught he knew, at that moment poised to transfix him, yet he fired not till ordered, and then would not shed blood, lest his master should repent of having ordered a fellow-creature to be slain! Harris had lived eighteen years with Captain Sturt, and acted upon a full knowledge of that officer's character. The whole transaction reflects the highest honour upon these two thoroughbred soldiers."

At noon on March 23 the little company reached the depot they had quitted seventy-seven days before. It was abandoned! They stared with hungry eyes at the traces of the camp which offered them no food!

Sturt, however, reminded his men that their comrades had only obeyed orders in falling back to Wantabadgery. Nothing remained but to take to the boat again. A flood that night, by an evil chance, broke into the narrow channel of the Murrumbidgee, and the stream rose six feet before dawn. For seventeen days the little band fought with the turbid and rushing current, making but little progress each day. "Their arms," says Sturt, "were nerveless, their faces haggard, their persons emaciated, their spirits wholly sunk. From sheer weakness they frequently fell asleep at the oar." Sturt blames himself. Even his serene courage grew fretful, but it was from a generous impulse. "Grieved to the heart," he says, "at their condition, I became captious, found fault without cause, and lost the equilibrium of my temper. No murmur, however, escaped them. One of the party partially lost his senses, and became incoherent in talk and manner."

Provisions would altogether have failed but for the good fortune of being able to kill several swans. On April 11 they camped on the flat known as Hamilton's Plains. Wantabadgery, where supplies awaited them, was, in a direct line, less than ninety miles distant; by water the distance was not far short of 300 miles. It was plain that the boat journey must be given up, and two men, Hopkinson and Mulholland, were sent forward to reach the camp and bring up supplies. It was reckoned they would take eight days; but on the sixth day the last ounce of flour in the camp was gone. "As the morrow would see us without food," says Sturt, "I preferred to advance towards relief."

The boat was burnt, specimens were buried in readiness for the start the next morning, when, late that evening, a shout from the forest told of the return of Hopkinson and Mulholland. "Both," says Sturt, "were in a state that beggars description. With knees and ankles dreadfully swollen, and with limbs so painful that on arriving in camp they sank to the ground, yet they met us smiling and rejoicing to relieve us so seasonably."

On May 25, after an absence of six months, the party reached Sydney. In their journey from the mouth of the Murrumbidgee to the sea and back Sturt rowed 1700 miles. "This," says Sturt himself, "is the longest boat voyage on record in naval annals." It was performed in a whale-boat, with a crew of eight men, including the officers, who shared in the labour. On their return, against the current, it took eighty-four days, at twenty-one miles a day, from sunrise to sunset, on three-quarters to one pound of flour a day and a quarter of a pound of tea only per week. Moreover, the party succeeded in keeping on good terms with the native tribes as they passed, although they were never safe for a day whilst on the river.

That whale-boat ought to have been preserved as historic. If lying to-day, say, in the Sydney Museum, it would be the most interesting object in Australia. With it Sturt had unlocked to the world the largest river system in Australia. As a story of pluck and endurance it would be difficult to surpass this achievement. Incidentally, it may be added, it was the cheapest bit of exploring work done in Australian history. Here, taken from Darling's despatch to the

Colonial Office, is a statement of the "expenses incurred in equipping Sturt's parties":

Cost of first expedition . .	£209	15	9
Cost of second expedition . .	265	19	$4\frac{3}{4}$
	£475	15	$1\frac{3}{4}$

If we compare that modest bit of arithmetic with the sums expended, say, in equipping such an expedition as that of Burke and Wills, and then add a comparison of the results of the two expeditions, we may form some conception of Sturt's qualities as an explorer.

CHAPTER IX

A SEARCH FOR A GHOST RIVER

In the long procession of Australian explorers, perhaps the most masterful and commanding figure is that of Sir Thomas Mitchell. His face—with the square high forehead, the massive jaws, the open eyes, the shaggy overhanging eyebrows, the wide mouth, with lips so firmly shut that they give the effect of a long level line, drawn with a ruler, across the whole face—is the sign of his temperament. He was a Stirlingshire Scot by birth; his mother was the daughter of the founder of the great Carron Works; and there was in Mitchell, by gift of birth, a mixture of granite and iron.

His training was that of a soldier. When a boy of only sixteen he joined the British army in the Peninsula as a volunteer, and when nineteen years of age received a commission in the 95th, a regiment of the Light Division, almost as famous in war as Cæsar's Tenth Legion. All the great resounding names of the Peninsula —Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, Salamanca, the Pyrenees, San Sebastian—find a place in his military record. He had no scientific training; but he had a gleam of artistic genius, as the illustrations in his journal show, and he had many of the natural gifts a surveyor needs. Wellington had to improvise his scientific staff, and the gifts of this square-headed Scottish youth were quickly

discovered. He was employed on the quartermaster-general's staff, and took an active part in laying out the famous lines of Torres Vedras. He was born in 1792 and died in 1855, and into the sixty-three years of his life he crowded a wealth of adventure and of hard work such as few lives have seen.

His active career as a soldier ended in 1826, and in 1827 he was appointed Deputy Surveyor-General to the colony of New South Wales. He was then thirty-five years of age—in the prime of life, that is—and while his experience as a soldier fitted him to be on the staff of what was practically a military settlement, his familiarity with outdoor life, his eye for "country," and his talent as a surveyor, eminently qualified him for the post he was now called to fulfil. Amongst his other titles to fame is that of being one of the great road-makers of the early Australian history. Only three years after his arrival in the colony, for example, he completed a survey of the roads to the Western Plains and Bathurst, and to-day both road and railway follow the track then laid down by him.

Mitchell had the faults of his temperament. He was blunt, masterful, positive, frank to rashness in speech; and a strain of jealousy ran through his character. His great rival in exploring work, Sturt, was of a courage as high as Mitchell himself, but it was a courage linked to gentleness. Both men were as brave as their own swords; but Sturt resembled a slender, finely tempered rapier; Mitchell, if he had the hitting quality and weight, had also the roughness of a Scottish claymore.

Two such men could hardly understand each other.

Sturt was generously patient with Mitchell; but through all Mitchell's explorations runs visibly a sort of furious anxiety to prove Sturt to be wrong. In his writings, he pays only one compliment to his fine-spirited rival, and that compliment was a blunder. He praises Sturt for his sketch of the junction of the Darling with the Murray, and says he recognised it by that sketch. "I am sorry to say," wrote Sturt afterwards, "it is not at all like the place, because it obliges me to reject the only praise Sir Thomas Mitchell ever gave me." The sketch, as it happens, was drawn by an artist who had never seen it, from a description of it given by Sturt at a time when he was temporarily blind.

Sturt could thank God in his old age that he never shed a drop of aboriginal blood; there is no crimson stain on the record of his explorations. But Mitchell set out on each of his four explorations in the spirit of a soldier undertaking a campaign on hostile soil. "Fort Bourke," on the Darling, is his characteristic monument; and through his four expeditions runs the crackle of musketry. Each is stained with human blood. Yet he did fine work in opening up to civilised occupation the vast expanse of the Australian continent.

The first of Mitchell's four expeditions may not unfairly be described as an expedition in search of a ghost river, a mysterious imaginary stream called the Kindur. A convict named Clark, generally known as "The Barber," had taken to the bush. He joined the blacks, adopted the native dress—or absence of dress—stained his skin, scarified his flesh, and went about with the tribe, naked and painted black, with a couple of attendant gins. But "The Barber," if he adopted the

morals and social habits of the blacks, yet carried into his new relationships the daring temper, and the predatory impulses, of the convict. "He was," says Mitchell himself, "a man of remarkable character, and far before his fellows in talent and cunning, a man who might have organised the scattered natives into formidable bands of marauders." He, with a number of other runaway convicts like himself, erected cattle stealing into a system, and became a public nuisance. He was captured by the police, and, to save his neck from the rope, declared he knew of the existence of a large river named the Kindur, which ran to south-west till it reached the sea.

The scamp had a picturesque imagination, and he embroidered his story with details which exactly suited the imagination and hopes of the settlement. There was a great river running westward, with fleets of canoes carrying cargoes of scented wood. "The Barber" declared he had sailed down it many hundreds of miles. It ran past a burning mountain: from its mouth a great island was visible. The tale of "The Barber" supplied the impulse which started Mitchell on his first expedition, but "The Barber" himself, though he had secured reprieve by his tale, would not risk his neck by waiting till Mitchell came back. He filed his chains, dug through the floor of his prison cell, and escaped. The authorities believed that he would organise a band of natives to attack Mitchell's expedition, and sent a messenger at speed to warn Mitchell, who had started, of his danger. "The Barber" was recaptured, but the death sentence was commuted to perpetual imprisonment. Mitchell was tempted to take the man with him

on his second expedition, but the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, regarded the experiment as too dangerous, and "The Barber," later, came to the natural end of his career, and was hanged. Meanwhile, this scamp made his mark on Australian history as the real author of Mitchell's first journey.

On November 21, 1831, Mitchell set out on his expedition. He started very much in the spirit of a soldier beginning a campaign. "I felt," he said, "the ardour of my early youth when I first sought distinction in the crowded camp and battlefield. . . . It seemed that even war and victory, with all their glory, were far less alluring than the pursuit of researches such as these for the purpose of spreading the light of civilisation over a portion of creation yet unknown, rich, perhaps, in the luxuriance of uncultivated nature."

His party consisted of fifteen men, two of them carpenters, four of them sailors, and all convicts. "These," he says, "were the best men I could find. All were ready to face fire or water in hopes of regaining, by desperate exploits, a portion, at least, of that liberty which had been forfeited to the laws of the country." The penal laws of the time were both cruel and stupid, and men were transported as criminals for offences that to-day would be counted trivial. One of his men was "the son of a respectable house-carpenter on the banks of the Tweed, where he had been too fond of shooting game"; another had been a soldier in the Guards; two were old men-of-warsmen; another had been a soldier in India, and was banished to New South Wales for some offence against discipline; another had been a bog-surveyor in Ireland. "He was," says

Mitchell, "an honest creature, but had got somehow implicated there in a charge of administering unlawful oaths." Part of the equipment of the party consisted of two portable boats of canvas, suggested by Sturt's experiences; but they proved of little value.

On December 16, Mitchell reached the Namoi, launched his canvas boats, and at once discovered their uselessness. They leaked diligently; the snags tore fatal rents in their sides, and any attempt at navigation was given up. The country was dry, the vegetation was scanty, and what natives they met were of a very low type. He describes one old woman who lacked activity enough to escape from the party as a "figure, shortened and shrivelled with age, entirely naked, one eye alone saw through the dimmed decay of nature, several large fleshy excrescences projected from the sides of her head, like so many ears, and the jawbone was visible through a gash or scar in one side of her chin. The withered arms and hands, covered with earth by digging and scraping for the snakes and worms on which she fed, resembled the limbs and claws of a quadruped."

The party struggled on, always scorched with heat, and often in distress for want of water, till they reached the Gwydir. But the river ran obstinately to the south, and, after following its course for eighty miles, Mitchell left it, and struck to the north again, until they came to a noble stream, deep and broad. Mitchell promptly labelled it the "Karaula," a name he picked up from the natives. But was this the "Kindur"? Mitchell followed its course with mingled hope and doubt. "Here it was indeed a noble piece of water," he says,

"and realised, at least for a day or two, all that we imagined of the Kindur. From a bank seventy feet high I looked on a river as broad as the Thames at Putney, on which the waves, perfectly free from fallen timber, danced at full liberty."

Following the stream down it was joined by another which he recognised as the Gwydir. But this latest river, too, persisted in a southward course, and Mitchell was reluctantly convinced that it was not a new river, but simply the upper-flow of the Darling. He was eager to discover a river on his own account, and was preparing to push boldly into the unknown landscapes to the north and west of the Darling, when Finch, his assistant surveyor, whom he had left behind at Mount Fraser with a section of the party, arrived with the news that the natives had attacked the camp, carried off its supplies, and killed two of his men. Mitchell had no choice but to start for the plundered camp, bury his murdered men, and return to Sydney. He had discovered no new river. The Kindur, of the convict's tale, was a myth. But the expedition had, at least, shed some light on the river-system of the upper Darling.

In 1835 Mitchell was despatched on a new expedition to follow the course of the Darling from the point where Sturt's expedition had turned back, down to the Murray. In his famous run down the Murray, Sturt had passed the mouth of a river which he was satisfied was the Darling; but many doubted it, Mitchell himself being amongst the most obstinate of sceptics. In any case there was a long stretch of unexplored water betwixt the Darling where Sturt had struck it in 1828, and

the point of its junction with the Murray; and Mitchell's business was to traverse that stretch of unknown river course.

He took a stronger party even than in his first expedition. It numbered twenty-one; nine of them had formed part of the expedition of 1831. The equipment included two light whale-boats, one made to fit within the other, the double boat being suspended within a frame, on belts of canvas, forming a huge waggon. Richard Cunningham, a brother of Allan Cunningham, an accomplished naturalist, young and ardent, was one of the party, and for him it was doomed to be a tragedy.

The expedition started in March 1835, and sauntered in a leisurely fashion to the head of the Bogan River. They had nearly reached the Bogan, when, on April 17, Cunningham failed to rejoin the camp at night. They fired guns during the night, but the missing man made no appearance. For days the party sought for him; they came on his tracks, and lost them again. Cunningham, as happens with an unhappy wanderer lost in the bush, had rambled in every direction. Months afterwards a party of mounted police, despatched on his traces, ascertained the unfortunate naturalist's end. He had fallen in with a tribe of natives on the Bogan, made signs he was hungry, and they gave him food. He encamped with them that night, but his restlessness disquieted them, and they resolved to kill him. One of the blacks crept behind him, struck him on the head with a nulla, and the others rushed in with their spears and slew him. Each of Mitchell's expeditions had its tragedy: but there

is none sadder than the death of Cunningham. He was young, ardent, educated, with great charm of personality, and was an accomplished scientist. That such a life should have been beaten out with the nullas of a cluster of Bogan River blacks was a real tragedy. A rude stone memorial marks the spot where he was killed, and a tablet in St. Andrew's Church, in Sydney, records his end.

On May 25 Mitchell reached the Darling. The country had been swept by rains; grass was abundant; the river water, unlike the briny fluid which astonished Sturt's party, was perfectly sweet. But the blacks were abundant, and Mitchell, with the obstinate instinct of a soldier, selected, he says, "the spot in which our tents then stood for a place of defence, and proceeded to erect a strong stockade of rough logs." "For," he reflects, "we did not ask permission to come there from the inhabitants, who were reported to be numerous." All hands were set to work felling trees and cutting branches, and in a very short time a stockade was in progress, capable of a stout resistance against any number of natives. Mitchell labelled his stockade "Fort Bourke," and evidently regarded this performance most complacently. But that a party of twenty-one white men, with sufficient arms, should have thought it necessary to build a stockade as a defence against the natives is nothing less than surprising.

Mitchell had surveyed the Bogan from its source to its junction with the Darling, and now came the task which was the object of the whole expedition. The course of the Darling was to be followed till it reached the Murray, or was proved *not* to reach that

river. On May 30, Mitchell launched his two boats on the river. He named one the *Discovery* and the other *Resolution*, borrowing the titles, with a touch of vanity, from Cook's ships. But the boats, though they had been transported with vast toil over so great a distance, and bore high-sounding names, proved useless. The shallow reaches in the river stopped them almost every few yards. A point was reached where the river-bed for miles was full of rocks; so the *Discovery* and the *Resolution* were ignobly dragged ashore, and the course of the Darling had to be followed on foot, or on horseback.

Mitchell pushed on his tedious journey from June 11 to July 11, and during that month traced the river for 300 miles. The Murray was still 100 miles distant, but it was now certain that the channel of the Darling ran into it; and Mitchell, holding the object of the expedition to be practically attained, turned back. The natives were troublesome, and at the very moment they turned back, Mitchell's party came to musketry fire with them, several natives being killed. Mitchell carried back his boats, with their high-sounding names, perched on their carriage. "Although he had not derived much advantage from them," he records, "still in no situation had they appeared a superfluous portion of our equipment. Possessing these, we crossed the low grass plains and dry lagoons of the Darling without any apprehension of being entirely cut off by floods, while we were always prepared to take advantage of navigable waters had we found any of that description." It was clear that the two boats were valued for the impression they

made on the imagination of the party. But Mitchell was always a soldier rather than an explorer, and he adds: "The carriage, with the boats on high, covered with tarpaulin and placed beside the cart, according to our plans of encampment, formed a sort of field-work in which we were always ready for defence."

The expedition took nearly seven months; and with its equipment—its two boats dragged over so many miles of dry land in vain—was an expedition of a very different type from Sturt's daring run down the Murray in his single whale-boat, or the dash of Hume and Hovell southward from the Murrumbidgee to the sea.

Of Mitchell's four exploring expeditions, in a word, three might almost be described as failures. The story of the first, already told in these pages, was the search for a ghost river. His second was an attempt to follow the course of the Darling, and ended, in a sense, in defeat, as he was compelled to turn back when he was still 100 miles from the junction of that river with the Murray. The death of Richard Cunningham, the botanist, gave a tragic aspect to this expedition. Mitchell's fourth expedition, in 1845, was an attempt to establish an overland route to the Gulf of Carpentaria. It was inspired by the hope of discovering some great river, beside which the Darling, or even the Murray, would be mere rivulets; a river flowing, not westward, after the stubborn fashion of all streams yet discovered, but northward, into the Gulf of Carpentaria. This expedition yielded some valuable results; but the dream of a great river-system flowing in a new direction proved to be an illusion.

But Mitchell's third expedition—in 1836—which took

him across what is now known as Victoria, from Mount Hope to the mouth of the Glenelg—was a golden success. It revealed to the world a country so rich and beautiful, so open to instant use, that Mitchell gave to it the name of Australia Felix, "Australia the Happy." It was an act of disobedience to his instructions when Mitchell, after toiling up the Murray almost to its junction with the Goulburn, struck off to the south-west towards the sea; but it was a brilliant and happy disobedience. And no Australian explorer ever gazed on such scenery, or enjoyed such triumphs, as Mitchell did during those seventeen weeks betwixt June 29, 1836, the date when he turned the heads of his horses to the south-west, leaving the Murray behind him, and October 27, when he reached the Murrumbidgee on his return, bringing with him the tidings of a country so beautiful. Mitchell, of course, judged the country across which he had passed simply by its fitness for pastoral and agricultural pursuits. He saw the running streams, the lush pastures, the rolling downs—lake and river and forest—plains of rich soil waiting only for the touch of man's hand to blossom into orchards, or grow rich with waving harvests. Not even Mitchell's imagination guessed the mineral wealth hidden beneath the beautiful landscapes across which he rode.

Mitchell's original instructions were to follow the Darling till it reached the Murray. From their junction he was to push upwards to the sources of the Murray as far as practicable, and regain the colony somewhere about the Yass plains. He took with him the huge and clumsy boats he had already dragged over so many hundreds of miles in vain, and which

were destined to be almost as useless on this trip as on his previous adventure. The party numbered twenty-three men—bullock-drivers, blacksmiths, sailors, carpenters. "This," says Mitchell, after he had recited their names, "was the army with which I was to traverse unexplored regions peopled, as far as we knew, by hostile tribes." Mitchell was always much more of a soldier than an explorer, and he seemed to enter upon each of his journeys as on a campaign. His men on this trip wore a sort of uniform. It consisted of grey trousers and a red woollen shirt; "the latter article, when crossed by white braces," Mitchell explains, with all gravity, "giving the men somewhat of a military appearance."

Mitchell's warlike memories continually supplied him with suggestions which seem oddly out of place for a peaceful journey across an almost empty continent. He had sent his party on ahead, but rejoined it on March 17. "It was St. Patrick's Day, and I remembered," he writes, "that exactly on that morning, twenty-four years before, I had marched down the glacis of Elvas to the tune of 'St. Patrick's Day in the Morning,' as the sun rose over the beleaguered towers of Badajos." So he records, later, that he climbed one of the peaks of the Grampians on the anniversary of the battle of Salamanca, and he gave the hill the name of the Arapiles—the twin hills, rugged and steep, which formed a sort of gateway to the plain on which the great battle was fought, and round which raged the most desperate fighting of the whole day. It was a suggestion from Torres Vedras, again, which supplied the plan for a bridge across the Yarrayne; a bridge which, by the way,

proved useless, since a rise in the stream put it four feet under water before it could be used. He named a hill on the Gleneig "Fort O'Hara," "in memory," he writes, "of a truly brave soldier, my commanding-officer, who fell at Badajos in leading the forlorn hope of the Light Division to the storm." Mitchell's present expedition, like the others, was marked by a splutter of musketry and the slaughter of not a few blacks, and it was the triumph of the soldier in him, over the explorer, which explains that unhappy circumstance.

A wasting drought lay on hill and plain and river when Mitchell's expedition started. He reached the Lachlan, down which Oxley had crept with his boats. Mitchell had bigger boats than Oxley, perched high on wheels, but there was no water on which they could float. The very bed of the river was dry, with the exception of casual pools. "I had," is Mitchell's melancholy reflection, "during the last winter drawn my whale-boats 1600 miles over land without finding a river where I could use them; whereas Mr. Oxley had twice retired by nearly the same routes, and at the same season of the year, from supposed inland seas." So perplexing are the Australian seasons, so capricious the Australian rivers!

Mitchell's obstinate mistrust of Sturt's discoveries—a distrust which had jealousy as its root—early showed itself on this expedition. Perhaps, he argued—or, it might almost be said, hoped—Sturt had blundered, and mistaken the Lachlan for the Darling. On April 22 Mitchell had to abandon the attempt of following the Lachlan further, owing to want of water. "Had I succeeded," he wrote, "in reaching the Lachlan at

about sixty miles west of my camp, I might have been satisfied that it was this river which Captain Sturt mistook for the Darling, and then I might have sought the Darling by crossing the range on the north," thus proving the theory—to which he clung so stubbornly, and so mistakenly—that the Darling drained a basin of its own, and found its independent way to the sea. He made a dash to the west, reaching Oxley's furthest limit on May 5, but did *not* find that the Lachlan resolved itself into the Darling. Sturt, most painstaking of men, it was clear, had made no mistake.

On May 12 Mitchell reached the Murrumbidgee, and for a moment almost persuaded himself that it was the Murray:

"This magnificent river was flowing within eight feet of its banks with considerable rapidity, the water being quite clear, and it really exceeded so much my expectations (surpassing far the Darling and all the Australian rivers I had then seen), that I was at first inclined to think this noble stream could be nothing less than the Murray, which, like the Darling, might have been laid down, for aught I knew, too far to the west. At all events, I was delighted to find that this corner of Australia could supply at least one river worthy of the name."

He left some of his men in camp on the Murrumbidgee, and pushed on to the Darling, intending, according to his instructions, to follow it down to its junction with the Murray. There must have been some special fighting quality in the native tribes on the Darling—or perhaps their experiences with Mitchell's previous expedition had left bitter memories—for

Mitchell found the tribes gathering about his party, and dogging his steps, with a very threatening aspect. Mitchell's journal at this stage almost reads like a military despatch. He "orders his men under arms," but "not to fire unless at the sound of the bugle," &c. He reaches at last a point where he says:

"It now became necessary for me to determine whether I was to allow the party under my charge to be perpetually subject to be cut off in detail, by waiting until what these natives threatened had taken place, and they had actually again thrown their spears and slain some of my people; or whether it was not my duty, in a war which not my party, but these savages, had virtually commenced, to anticipate the intended blow."

In this mood a fight was almost inevitable, and any trifle might kindle it. Mitchell placed a number of his men "in ambuscade," but the dogs of the natives discovered them. The natives gathered around with threatening spears, and then the muskets spoke! Mitchell came on the scene when the river was mottled with the black heads of the natives swimming to escape.

"I was not," he says, "then aware what accidental provocation had brought on this attack without my orders, but it was no longer time for inquiring, for the men who were with me, as soon as they heard the shots of their comrades, and saw me ascend the hill, ran furiously down the steep bank to the river, not a man remaining with the carts. By the time I had also got down, the whole party lined the river bank. Most of the natives were then near the other side, and getting

out, while others swam down the stream. The sound of so much firing must have been terrible to them."

There was much firing, and seven blacks were shot while struggling with the sliding flood of the Darling. "The result," says Mitchell, "was the permanent deliverance of the party from imminent danger. I gave," he adds, "to the little hill which witnessed this overthrow of our enemies, and was to us the harbinger of peace and tranquillity, the name of Mount Dispersion." Had Sturt, however, been in command instead of Mitchell, there would have been no flash of musketry, no slaughter of swimming men in the Murray, and no "Mount Dispersion."

CHAPTER X

THE NEW GARDEN OF THE WORLD

The sun had scorched with its heat all the landscapes over which Mitchell was now toiling; the Darling itself had shrunk into a chain of ponds, and the ponds themselves threatened to disappear. "I walked across the channel of the Darling," says Mitchell, "dry-shod." The Murray had not yet been reached, "but," Mitchell writes, "as I stood on the adverse side of this hopeless river I began to think I had pursued its course far enough. All around as far as I could see was one unvaried desert." It was practically certain that the Darling *did* flow into the Murray; why follow it till the streams actually met? Mitchell was anxious about the safety of his depot, and of the party he had left in charge of it; and, still contemplating things through military spectacles, he gravely reflects: "It was not probable that the tribe which had collected 500 men to attack Captain Sturt would be quiet in my rear after having lost some of their number. To be in separate parties amongst a savage population was perilous according to the length of time we continued separate." He accordingly gave up the attempt to follow the channel of the Darling, and pushed on to strike it at a lower point.

He reached it just before its actual junction with the

Murray. Here, at least, was the geographical problem finally solved; for when Mitchell agreed with Sturt there remained no room for doubt. At this point in his journal Mitchell gives birth to the only compliment he ever paid his rival. As he "gazed from the further bank upon the stream of the Darling as it flowed into the Murray," he says, "I recognised the view given in Captain Sturt's work, and the adjacent localities described by him." As it happens, however, this view was not Sturt's work; it was a sketch prepared by some unknown artist in Edinburgh from Sturt's description, and bore but small resemblance to the actual scene.

Mitchell rejoined the party he had left at the depot, launched his boats on the Murray, and pushed his course upwards. He kept to the river till June 10, when he reached its junction with the Murrumbidgee. On June 20 he formed a camp at what is now known as Swan Hill. A week later he climbed to the summit of Mount Hope. To the west and south stretched an unknown landscape dark with forests, green with pasture, pricked with hills—blue with that tint of azure Australian hills wear when seen through leagues of sun-warmed atmosphere. This was a landscape, Mitchell records, "too inviting to be left behind unexplored, and I forthwith determined to turn into it without further delay."

He was, in fact, turning the heads of his horses and bullocks towards the Glenelg and the sea; and from this point a new note becomes audible in his diary, the true rapture of the discoverer. Too often the tale of Australian exploration is a tale of disappointments: of rivers that ceased to flow; of plains on

which the grass was turned to dust; of perpetual danger of death from mere thirst. But now Mitchell's course lay through a country that seemed to his wondering eyes a vaster Garden of Eden. It was musical with running brooks, picturesque with hills set in azure, rich in food for man and beast. The plains and hill-slopes, indeed, were so moist with rains that the chief difficulty consisted in dragging the carts across them. Mitchell's cart-wheels left on them tracks so deep that they were the puzzle and terror of the natives at the time, and had historic interest for the white settlers fifty years afterwards. The natives could not understand those two strange narrow grooves cut deep into the soil, which ran without a break across the whole country. What strange beast had left such tracks!

Mitchell's route to the sea is easily followed. He went at first due south, following the course of the Loddon almost to its source. Then he struck westward, drawn by the challenge of the distant Grampians, till he reached the Wimmera. It ran, however, almost at right angles across his course, and he pushed on south-west till he reached the head waters of the Glenelg, then followed it till it broke—or, rather, trickled—into the sea near Cape Nelson.

The weather was beautiful, the country on the whole easy: feed was abundant, and almost every day's travel revealed to Mitchell's wondering eyes some new natural beauties, and the surprise and gladness of each new discovery is reflected in his journal. His imagination is stirred almost into poetry. Thus, on June 30, he describes the view from the summit of Pyramid Hill:

"The view over the surrounding plains was exceedingly beautiful, as they shone fresh and green in the light of a fine morning. The scene was different from anything I had ever before witnessed, either in New South Wales or elsewhere, a land so inviting and still without inhabitants! As I stood, the first intruder on the sublime solitude of these verdant plains as yet untouched by flocks or herds, I felt conscious of being the harbinger of mighty changes there; for our steps would soon be followed by the men and the animals for which it seemed to have been prepared."

On July 7 he got, from some natives, his first hint of Port Phillip. Pointing to the south-east, they explained that there was a station of white-fellows there on the sea-coast. Next day they struck what he calls "one of the most beautiful spots I ever saw: the turf, the woods, and the banks of the little stream that murmured through the vale, had so much the appearance of a well-kept park, that I felt loth to break it by the passage of our cart-wheels. The earth seemed to surpass in richness any that I had seen in New South Wales, and I was even tempted to bring away a specimen of it."

On the 10th, another stream, running westward, was crossed, which he named the Avoca, and beyond it a few miles they came upon the beautiful stream now known as the Avonwater. "The land along the margins of this stream," Mitchell records, "was as good as that we were now accustomed to see everywhere around us, so that it was no longer necessary to note the goodness or the beauty of any place in particular."

From a high forest-hill he feasted his eyes on what he calls "a noble range of mountains, rising in the south to a stupendous height, and presenting as bold and picturesque an outline as ever painter imagined. I confess," he says, "that it is not without some pride as a Briton that I gave the name of the Grampians to these extreme summits of the southern hemisphere." Now the Grampians are a mountain range of great beauty, and when seen like a serrated wall against the evening sky, or at noontide, bathed in the exquisite azure which the pure Australian air generates, may well delight a painter; but they can hardly be described as "of stupendous height." Mitchell pushed on towards these mountains, blue in distance, and he grows almost lyrical over the character of the country through which he passed. Thus, on July 13, he writes:

"We had at length discovered a country ready for the immediate reception of civilised man, and fit to become eventually one of the great nations of the earth. Unencumbered with too much wood, yet possessing enough for all purposes; with an exuberant soil under a temperate climate; bounded by the sea-coast and mighty rivers, and watered abundantly by streams from lofty mountains: this highly interesting region lay before me with all its features new and untouched as they fell from the hand of the Creator! Of this Eden it seemed that I was only the Adam; and it was indeed a sort of Paradise to me, permitted thus to be the first to explore its mountains and streams—to behold its scenery—to investigate its geological character—and, finally, by my survey, to develop

those natural advantages all still unknown to the civilised world, but yet certain to become, at no distant date, of vast importance to a new people."

Mitchell was a Scot, familiar with mountain scenery, and he spent some happy days clambering amongst the Grampians, giving to one commanding summit the name of the reigning monarch, King William. Then he pushed on seaward, and on July 18 struck the Wimmera: "a flowing stream, the water being deep and nearly as high as the banks. I did not doubt that this was the channel of the waters from the north side of these mountains, and was, on the contrary, convinced that it contained the water of all these streams we had crossed on our way to Mount William, with the exception of Richardson's creek, already crossed by the party, and then flowing to the north-west. The richness of the soil and verdure on its banks, and the natural beauty of the scenery, could scarcely be surpassed in any country."

He was now making towards the sea, and pushed on to the south-west, his chief difficulty being the softness of the rain-soaked earth. Each day's journey was a mere flounder through mud. On July 30 they struck a granite country, and he records that "the transition from all we sought to avoid to all that we sought, in the character of the country, was so agreeable that I can regard that evening as one of the happiest in my life." On July 31 they were brought to a full stop by a fine river flowing south-west. It was everywhere deep and full; no ford could be found. It was the Glenelg. The broad, dark waters tempted Mitchell to try his boats, and on August 1

he embarked with a fortnight's provisions. After a voyage of only two miles, however, the beautiful river broke into many streams, navigation was impossible, and the useless boats were dragged ashore and the plodding journey by land resumed. "The country on the banks of this stream," Mitchell reports, "was, as far as I could see, the finest imaginable either for sheep and cattle or for cultivation. The land was everywhere alike beautiful. All parts were verdant, whether on the finely varied hills or in the equally romantic vales which seemed to open in endless succession on both banks of the river." The scenery, in a word, was teaching Mitchell to be a poet—with the exaggerated epithets of a poet. He plainly felt as though he were turning over, day after day, the pages of some richly illuminated book.

At this point, as the stream was running WSW., there arose in Mitchell's mind that vision which haunted—and cheated—in turn the imagination of almost every Australian explorer: the dream of a great river breaking into the sea. Might there not be some harbour or estuary into which the waters of the Glenelg flowed? He pushed on through country about which, he says, "a more bountiful distribution of waters for the supply of a numerous population could not be imagined, nor a soil better adapted for cultivation."

On August 7, after crossing some difficult country and reaching a brow of high land, Mitchell breaks into lyrical prose again:

"What a noble prospect appeared! A river winding amongst meadows that were fully a mile broad, and green as an emerald. Above them arose swelling hills

of fantastic shapes, but all were smooth and thickly covered with rich grass. Behind these were higher hills, all having grass on their sides and trees on their summits, and extending east and west throughout the landscape as far as I could see. I hastened to ascertain the course of the river, by riding about two miles along one entirely open grassy ridge, and then found again the river Glenelg, flowing eastward towards an apparently much lower country. All our difficulties seemed thus already at an end, for we found here good firm ground on which we could gallop, this being also clear of timber. The river was making for the most promising bay on the coast (for I saw that it turned southward some miles below the hill on which I stood) through a country far surpassing in beauty and richness any part hitherto discovered."

The party pushed on across green hills and running brooks, and on August 10 "a scene opened to our view which gladdened every heart. An open grassy country, extending as far as we could see—the hills round and smooth as a carpet—the meadows broad, and either green as an emerald, or of a rich golden colour from the abundance, as we soon afterwards found, of a little ranunculus-like flower. Down into that delightful vale our vehicles trundled over a gentle slope, the earth being covered with a thick matted turf, apparently superior to anything of the kind previously seen. That extensive valley was watered by a winding stream whose waters glittered through trees fringing each bank."

They passed valley after valley, each different from the other, but, says Mitchell, "I could not decide

which looked most beautiful. All contained excellent soil and grass surpassing in quality any I had seen in the present colony of New South Wales." On the 12th they crossed a range, which he named the Rifle Range. After the party had struggled across some ranges, they saw from a high tree a river "very large, and like the Murray," and apparently excellent for boats. It was the Glenelg once more, and Mitchell's prose again grows lyrical: "Our labours, to all appearance," he writes, "were on the eve of being crowned by the brilliant discovery of some harbour, which might serve as a port to one of the finest regions upon earth. At all events, if we could no longer travel on land, we had at length arrived with two boats within reach of the sea, and this alone was a pleasing reflection after the delays we had lately experienced."

The boats were launched and the party pushed seaward. The stream on which they floated, says Mitchell, on August 19, was, "considering the permanent fullness of its stream, the character of its banks, and uniformity of width and depth, the finest body of fresh water I had seen in Australia; and our hopes were that day sanguine that we should find an outlet to the sea of proportionate magnitude."

Presently, alas! the stream grew shallow; sandy-looking hills appeared; and, on rounding a low rocky point, the green rolling breakers of the sea were visible through an opening straight before the stem of the boat. It was the mouth of the Glenelg. But where was the longed-for "estuary"? There was scarcely sufficient water to float the boats; and "thus," says Mitchell, "our hope of finding a port at the mouth of

this fine river was at once at an end." The Glenelg, in a word, followed the law of all Australian rivers. It was an anti-climax. It grew smaller at the point where it reached the sea; it shrank to a mere trickle!

Mitchell now pushed eastward, crossing much difficult country, but always finding valleys of the richest soil, "just such land," he records, "as would produce wheat during the driest seasons and never become sour in the wettest." On August 29 they came upon fresh tracks of cattle and the shoe-marks of a white man. Presently one of the party picked up a broken tobacco pipe and a glass bottle without a neck. Here was the very signature of civilisation: a broken pipe, an empty whisky bottle! Mitchell pushed on as far as Cape Bridgewater, and saw what seemed to be "some grey rocks under the grassy cliffs opposite." His telescope showed that they were wooden houses; a brig was at anchor off the coast. Mitchell drew near the settlement with due military precautions. "The parties," he reflected, "might either be, or suppose us to be, bushrangers, and to prevent mistakes I ordered the men to fire a gun and sound the bugle."

It was Mr. Henty's settlement. It had been established at that spot for two years, and Henty was gathering the harvests both of sea and land. He had a good garden stocked with vegetables. "The potatoes and turnips produced here," writes Mitchell—the practical Scot emerging—"surpassed in magnitude and quality any I had ever seen elsewhere." Upwards of 700 tons of whale-oil had been shipped from the bay already, that season; and only a few days before Mitchell broke in upon them out of the untravelled

bush, five vessels lay at anchor there. "Messrs. Henty," he writes, "were importing sheep and cattle as fast as vessels could bring them over." When Mitchell left the settlement on August 30, the last glimpse he caught was of three boats pushing out to sea, a harpooner standing up in the stern of each, oar in hand. A whale had been sighted. Settlement, it is clear, had been started with a very vigorous pulse at Portland.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail Mitchell's course back to New South Wales. He took a line further to the east, and swung far enough eastward to touch Mount Macedon. Mitchell, indeed, is responsible for that name. The Philip he remembered was not the commander of the First Fleet, but the inventor of the Macedonian phalanx, and the father of Alexander the Great; "and I gave it the name of Mount Macedon," writes Mitchell, "with reference to that of Port Phillip." From the summit Mitchell could see as far as Indented Head and Point Nepean; "but," he says, "I could trace no signs of life about this harbour, no stockyards, cattle, or even smoke." It was so recently as 1837 that Mitchell gazed on the empty waters of Port Phillip Bay from Mount Macedon; to-day the gazer from that hill can see the smoke, the roofs, the mile-long streets of one of the great cities of the world.

On October 27, Mitchell, on his return journey, had reached what he calls "the green banks of the Murrumbidgee." In his journal he sums up his impressions of the country through which he had passed. He still cherished one illusion, that behind Cape Northumberland, and to the westward, would be found "a harbour

which would possess advantages over any other on the southern coast." Then he writes:

"The high mountains in the east have not yet been explored, but their very aspect is refreshing in a country where the summer heat is often very oppressive. The land is, in short, open and available in its present state for all the purposes of civilised man. We traversed it in two directions with heavy carts, meeting no other obstruction than the softness of the rich soil, and in returning over flowery plains and green hills fanned by the breezes of early spring, I named this region Australia Felix, the better to distinguish it from the parched deserts of the interior country, where we had wandered so unprofitably and so long."

Australia the Happy! And if the country across which, seventy years ago, Mitchell wandered, does not to-day deserve that great title, the reason is not to be found in its natural conditions. Not Nature, but man, casts whatever shadow may lie on that great title of "Australia Felix."

BOOK IV

LAWLESS DAYS AND LIVES

CHAPTER I

TALES OF STRANGE CRIMES

The Australian bushranger, when translated into literary terms, is a picturesque figure, and, it is to be feared, has made an exaggerated impression on the popular mind outside Australia. The mental picture which, up to a very recent date, many people in England had of Australia was that of a vast, scantily peopled continent, up and down which bushrangers—wild and bearded figures, armed much after the fashion of the typical buccaneer of Drake's time—were perpetually galloping. They were supposed, indeed, to form the chief feature in the landscape. As a matter of fact, the bushranger fills a very tiny page in Australian history.

Australia has witnessed two eruptions of bushranging, both of them brief, and each perfectly distinct in type and period. One represents imported, the other home-grown, crime. The imported variety owed its birth to the convict settlements. The indigenous period begins with Gardiner in New South Wales, and ends with the Kellys in Victoria: a stretch of less than thirty years—say from 1850 to 1880—scribbled over in grim characters with the performances of some three hundred bushrangers, all of them very young, some of them only boys.

The original Australian bushranger calls for no explanation, and Australia has no responsibility for his existence. He was the undesired gift of the motherland. The Bradys, Pierces, and Mike Howes of Tasmania, the Lynches and Jacky Jackys of New South Wales, were criminals who had changed their skies, but not their habits, by coming in a convict ship to Australia. Australia certainly gave such men a new field under new conditions; and when they carried the morals bred in the slums of Liverpool, or Glasgow, or Dublin, into the scrubs of Tasmania or the wild hill-stretches of New South Wales, some new and picturesque results no doubt followed. Nothing, indeed, quite like the early Australian bushranger is discoverable anywhere else in the history of colonisation. But the tale of those early bushrangers makes up a very dreary bit of literature. It is lit up, it is true, by flashes of wild daring, and every now and again there emerges in it some monster—usually a bushranger of the solitary type, like Lynch or Pierce—a dreadful figure, such as suggests a new and terrifying scale to the evil possibilities lurking in human nature.

Crime has its roots in ignorance; it is blood-fellow to stupidity; it represents the victory of all the lower forces —intellectual as well as moral—over the higher. The partitions, indeed, which separate it from mere lunacy are of the thinnest dimensions. It is a story of human shipwreck. What is there of literary interest in the performances of some poor wretch, outcast from his own race, in whom the passions which link him to the brute are not only in a state of insurrection, but of triumphant insurrection, against everything that lifts

man *above* the brute! Such a character is nothing better than a bit of unwashed anarchy on two legs. The story of the early bushrangers, we repeat, is, like every other chapter in the great book of crime, a bit of very distressing literature. And Australia, it must be protested, while it suffered these early bushrangers, did not produce them, and is not responsible for them. Its final gift to them was the hangman's noose!

But the bushrangers of the second generation belong to a different type. Their performances are a history worth telling, and they themselves are a melancholy problem worth studying. Their story has a hundred curious and perplexing features. It was narrow in its area, being practically confined to only two States—New South Wales and Victoria. Its origin was due to many causes—geographical and social, as well as moral. It was part of the aftermath of the gold discoveries. The failure of State, and Church, and school alike to supply wholesome training for the remoter settlements, helps to explain the emergence of such an ugly human type. It was the direct result of the spread of vicious ideals amongst an entire but small class. That chapter of the book of Australian crime might well supply the text for much painful meditation. Putting aside, however, any "problems" which challenge discussion, it is sufficient to give in the present chapter, in briefest outline, the tale of the first generation of Australian bushrangers.

Almost the earliest figure which emerges on this murky landscape is that of a convict named Whitehead, who, in 1810, organised a gang, and for some three years made all the roads which lead into Hobart perilous.

The bonds of restraint on the convicts in Tasmania had fallen curiously lax, and in 1805, as the supply of food from Sydney failed, they were practically turned loose on the interior of the island, and set hunting kangaroos, and snaring water-fowl, for their own support. It was for the convicts a brief age of gold. They learned the methods and revelled in the joys of bush life, and when they were summoned by proclamation to return to the unsympathetic society of their warders, it is no wonder many of them preferred the wild freedom, and the rough companionships, of scrub and forest.

It was out of these "bolters," as they were called, that Whitehead organised his gang. Lieutenant-Governor Davey was an administrator of very drowsy habits, and after Whitehead and his band had enjoyed a prosperous career for nearly three years, he issued, on May 14, 1813, a proclamation notifying that all members of the gang who did not surrender before December 1 would be proclaimed outlaws. This practically gave Whitehead and his mates a free run for six months, and for that period they had "a good time" at the expense of honest citizens. Whitehead himself refused to surrender, and was shot in a conflict with a party of soldiers. One curious detail survives. The bushrangers had a grim compact betwixt themselves that, if one of them was wounded, and unable to escape, his companions should cut off his head, and carry it away, so as to prevent his pursuer receiving the reward offered for that dreadful relic. The dying bushranger was, in this way, to be stripped of all commercial value for his captor. When Whitehead was shot, he appealed to his lieutenant,

Mike Howe, to render him this last friendly service. Howe, with due loyalty, cut off his comrade's head, and carried it away as per agreement; but being himself hard pressed, he threw it into a bush. This ghastly relic was discovered, carried into Hobart, and the reward duly paid for it. It was a rough age, and given to rough practices.

Mike Howe, who performed this last grim office for Whitehead, became his successor in the leadership of the gang, and he is a very striking figure—quaint, and yet terrific—in the early annals of bushranging. He had served as a seaman on a British man-of-war, and into the lawless usages of his new life carried—or tried to carry—the discipline of the quarter-deck. He drew up articles of obedience, and every member of the gang was required to take—on the Prayer-Book—an oath of loyalty to it. A code of penalties, ranging from short rations up to the cat-o'-nine-tails, was enforced. A chapter in the Bible was read on solemn occasions to the whole party. Mike Howe took himself quite seriously. He was accustomed to send despatches, in which he adopted the title of the "Governor of the Ranges," to the representative of the Crown in Hobart, whom he called the Governor of the Town, and in these he discoursed in the accents of an equal. In one such despatch he offered to surrender, on condition of receiving a free pardon, and he suggested that an official of standing should be sent to meet him, so that they might confer "as gentleman to gentleman." Captain Nairne, of the 46th, was actually sent out to debate with Howe, and, terms being arranged, the bushranger accompanied the captain back to Hobart.

He was allowed to wait in that city on parole until it could be known whether Governor Macquarie, in Sydney, would grant the pardon for which Howe had stipulated. A rumour reached Hobart that Macquarie would make no terms with a notorious murderer, and Howe at once broke his parole and took to the bush again.

Howe was a giant in stature, and of a reckless daring, and he became the terror of the settlement. He had an aboriginal wife named Black Mary, who clung to him with a sort of canine devotion. Being closely pursued, however, by a party of soldiers, Howe found that his wife could not keep up with him, and to make sure that, if captured, she should not betray him, he turned, shot her, and then plunged into the scrub and escaped. The unfortunate woman survived, but in her dark spirit hate henceforth took the place of love, and she proved as tireless as a sleuth-hound in the business of Howe's pursuit.

Howe killed two members of his own gang whom he suspected of treachery. The promise of a free pardon, however, proved too much for the loyalty—or the terrors—of his remaining followers. Two of them caught him off his guard, knocked him down, tied his hands, and started on their journey to Hobart, one going first, gun in hand, a second, similarly armed, bringing up the rear. With a sudden effort of his gigantic limbs, Howe snapped the rope that bound his wrists, leaped on the man in front and stabbed him with a knife he had concealed in his dress; then, tearing the gun from the hands of the man as he fell, he wheeled round and shot his second captor dead.

Two ticket-of-leave men—Worrall, a former confederate of Howe, and Warburton—determined to capture him. They invited a private of the 48th, named Pugh, a very powerful and daring soldier, to join in the scheme. Worrall was to tempt Howe, now a solitary and hunted outcast, into Warburton's hut; Pugh and Warburton, lying hidden in the hut, were to spring on him when he entered. Some instinct warned Howe of danger. He carried his gun ready cocked in his hand, and when his foot was on the very threshold of the hut, he stopped, and peering in, saw the two crouching figures. "Is that your game?" he cried, and instantly fired. Pugh was in the very act of making his leap, however, and the gun was dashed aside. The moment Howe had fired he turned, and with the silence and speed of a hunted wolf ran for the scrub. The pursuit was fierce. Howe slipped on the bank of a creek, and rolled into its bed; but he leaped to his feet in a moment, with levelled pistol, while his pursuer stood on the bank above. The bushranger was a strange figure—gaunt, black-bearded, fierce-eyed, clad in patches of kangaroo skins. He stared an instant at his pursuer, who, as it happened, was a much older man than himself, cried out, "Black beard against grey beard for a million," and fired; then he wheeled and leaped at the bank of the creek. At this moment, Pugh ran up and sprang fiercely on Howe, striking him as he leaped with the butt of his firelock, and knocking out the poor wretch's brains.

Brady is another wild figure in the gallery of early Tasmanian bushrangers. He had his own rough code of ethics, and punished one of his gang, for offering

violence to a woman, by shooting him through the hand, thrashing him, and then solemnly kicking him out from the noble brotherhood of the bush. Brady, too, had a sense of humour. He did not take himself quite so seriously as Mike Howe; but when Governor Arthur offered a reward of £25 for his apprehension, Brady, by way of answer, posted in a public place a notice dated "Mountain Home, April 25." The notice ran: "It has caused Matthew Brady much concern that such a person known as Sir George Arthur is at large. Twenty gallons of rum will be given to any person that will deliver his person unto me. (Signed) M. Brady."

Brady was not content with the humdrum exploits of his predecessors. He made a descent on Sorell Gaol, caught the soldiers who formed its guard occupied in cleaning their muskets, locked them in various cells, and released all the prisoners. As a final touch of satire, Brady put a soldier's coat on a log of wood, propped it against the gaol door, with musket and bayonet beside it, so as to look like a sentry, and marched away in triumph.

Brady, betrayed by a confederate, was seized, while sleeping, by a couple of soldiers, who bound his arms strongly with rope. He took his seizure cheerfully, but begged for a drink of water. His cheerfulness disarmed his captors. The night was dark, the bank of the stream steep, and *both* soldiers went out to get a bucket of water. Brady immediately thrust his hands over the blazing fire and held them there till the rope was burned through; he hid himself behind the door till the soldiers returned, then sprang out, pulling the door

to behind him, fastened it, and so made his escape. A few days later his betrayer fell into his hands. "I will give you," said Brady, darkly, "while I have my supper," and he ate his supper—a very grim meal!—eyeing all the while, with ferocious eyes, the trembling wretch before him. His meal being finished, Brady rose, gun in hand, and bade his victim walk to a tree a dozen yards distant. As he walked with stumbling feet, Brady shot him through the head.

His duel with the law, Brady had wit enough to know, could have only one end, and he formed the plan of seizing a vessel, in order to escape from the settlement; but bad weather ruined what was a clever and daring scheme. Brady's audacity, flavoured with humour, was almost incredible. He wrote a letter to the commandant at Launceston, notifying, "with the bushrangers' compliments," that he proposed to rob a given house a mile out of Launceston, and attack the gaol in that town on the same night. The letter was treated as a jest, but the house was duly seized by the bushrangers, and plundered, on the evening named, and Brady, after entertaining the ladies with amusing stories, and singing a sentimental song to his own accompaniment on the piano, started to carry out the rest of his programme. A servant, however, had escaped and spread an alarm, and Colonel Balfour, with ten soldiers and some civilian volunteers, came hurrying up to capture the gang. There was a brisk engagement, and while Brady was exchanging shots with the soldiers he despatched part of his gang to seize the gaol. The attempt failed, but Brady drew off his party unhurt, carrying with them, as a trophy,

Colonel Balfour's hat, which had fallen off in the fight.

Brady had some of the qualities of a leader, but crime knows no loyalty. His followers quarrelled amongst themselves, and slew each other. Finally, Brady, a solitary and hunted man, lame from a wound he had received in a fight with the soldiery, was captured by John Batman—later the founder of the settlement at Port Phillip.

Batman had set himself to track Brady down in the fastnesses of the country known as the Western Tiers. He came upon him limping through the bush with the aid of a sapling, ragged, wasted, and evidently in great pain. At the sight of his pursuer, Brady, in spite of his wound, wheeled round with fierce swiftness, cocking his gun as he turned. Batman challenged him to surrender. "Are you an officer?" asked Brady. "I am not a soldier, I am John Batman," was the reply. "If you raise that gun I will shoot. There is no chance for you." "You are a brave man," said Brady, as he flung down his gun, "but I would never give in to a soldier."

At his trial the court was crowded with ladies, and when the judge put on the black cap to pronounce sentence of death, the sound of their weeping was so loud and general that the judge had to pause to secure silence. And yet Brady had many murders on his hands. Through his career, however, there ran a vein of humour, and a certain rough chivalry towards women, that in the primitive society of that day made sympathy possible.

There were, of course, many darker and fiercer spirits

than Brady amongst the early bushrangers. Nothing more ghastly can be easily imagined, for example, than the story of Pierce, the cannibal. In 1822 he, with seven companions, made their escape from the penal station at Macquarie Harbour. The party suffered great hardships, and at the end of eight days were starving. In his confession, Pierce relates in disquieting detail how they commenced to discuss human flesh as an article of diet. "Bill Cornelius said, 'I am so hungry I could eat a piece of a man.'" Four of them joined in a conspiracy to kill one of the other members of the party. "'I will eat the first bit,' said Greenhill, 'but you must all lend a hand so that we will all be equal in the crime. Who shall it be?' Greenhill said, 'Dalton: he volunteered to be a flogger; we will kill him.'" That night—about three in the morning—Dalton was asleep when Greenhill struck him on the head with an axe, and then cut the poor wretch's throat. The body was eaten. "At the end of four days," says Pierce, "we were very weak and hungry." A consultation was held as to who should be the next victim. Greenhill was again the murderer, and after the deed was done took off his victim's shoes and put them on his own feet. Next day, says Pierce, "we camped and dried the meat."

Pierce and one of the party named Mathers now drew apart from the rest. "Let us go on by ourselves," said Mathers: "you see what kind of a cove Greenhill is. He would kill his own father before he would fast for a day." The dreadful group, faint with hunger, and with Murder, an unseen phantom, keeping step with them, still, however, hung together. Mathers

fell sick, and Greenhill seized the moment when he was vomiting to attempt his murder. "Pierce," cried the unhappy Mathers, "will you see me murdered?" Greenhill was driven away from his victim for the moment. "We walked on till night," says Pierce, "then Travers and Greenhill collared Mathers and got him down. They gave him half an hour to pray. When the half hour was up, Mathers handed the Prayer-Book to me, and Greenhill killed him."

Two days later Travers fell lame. "He asked us to leave him to die in peace. When we were a little way off Greenhill said, 'Pierce, let us serve him like the rest.' I replied, 'I will have no hand in it.'" Greenhill turned back, however, found Travers lying on his back asleep, and killed him.

Only Greenhill and Pierce were now left, and they struggled on, each watching the other with haggard eyes, suspecting murder, and ready to commit it. Each was perpetually trying to get behind the other, or watching the other trying to get behind him. What a grim dance of death! At night they sat a little distance apart, facing each other, with sleepless eyes. Fear lay dark and heavy upon them. If one rose up, the other started to his feet instantly. Dante's *Inferno* might be searched in vain to find a picture to match this in horror. "I watched Greenhill for two nights," says Pierce, "and thought that he eyed me more than usual. He always carried the axe, and kept it under his head when lying down."

Pierce, in the end, succeeded in out-watching Greenhill, and, seizing the moment when he was off his guard, snatched the axe and killed him.

In his tale *For the Term of His Natural Life,* Marcus Clarke makes use of this dreadful story; but the unadorned prose of Pierce's own confession is a more impressive bit of literature than Marcus Clarke's dilution of it. The plain facts leave fiction bankrupt.

Pierce was arrested later, and, somehow, escaped hanging, though no man ever better deserved the rope. He made a second escape from Macquarie Harbour in 1823, in company with another convict named Cox. Five days afterwards Pierce was captured, but he was alone! He confessed that he had killed Cox and had eaten his body. No sharpness of hunger explained this last act of cannibalism. Pierce simply had a maniacal appetite for human flesh. He confessed to having induced Cox to escape with him, that he might kill and eat him.

In New South Wales bushranging was, at first, of a mild type, but was punished with relentless severity. The "bushranging" usually consisted of small thefts from the dwellings of outlying settlers, and in 1822 no less than thirty-four bushrangers were hanged in Sydney for such offences. Harsh laws, however, only make crime more desperate, and when a convict who took to the bush knew he was sure to be hanged, his warfare with society took a more ferocious tint. The gangs found — or made — a secret stronghold in a remarkable valley in the Blue Mountains, only fifty-four miles from Sydney. They formed a settlement which for years escaped the search of the police. It was known amongst the convicts as "Terrible Hollow"; and when at last, through the treachery of a convict, the police discovered the entrance to the valley, the

cattle running wild there, the numbers of broken shackles, handcuffs, &c., discovered, and the many signs of settlement, showed that it had been a stronghold of crime for many years.

One of the early figures in the procession of New South Wales bushrangers deserves, for ferocity, to be classed with Pierce, the cannibal, in Tasmania. He was an Irish convict, named Lynch, who arrived in New South Wales in 1832. Lynch was an incorrigible thief, who slipped easily and naturally into murder, and his murders were in scale and character absolutely unique. He was sentenced to death in 1842, and, like Pierce, he left a confession which forms a chapter in the literature of crime almost without parallel. Like the human fiend whose murders De Quincey has told in deathless prose, Lynch went on the principle of making all his murders complete in scale; and he performed each murder carefully, on a method which had its root in superstition. He took anxious care to kill his victim with a single blow of a tomahawk. His final victim being a very big and powerful man, and a famous wrestler, he struck him twice; and Lynch attributed his detection, and the end of his career, to having broken the strange rule—of a single blow—he had laid down for himself.

Lynch killed a carrier named Ireland, and a black boy who accompanied him, took possession of his victim's team, and drove it to Sydney, where he sold it. He returned to the neighbourhood of his first crime, and met a couple of carriers, father and son, named Frazer. Lynch was simply a Thug under the disguise of a Celt, and just as an Indian Thug treats murder as

a form of piety, and accompanies it with acts of worship to Kali, so Lynch wove a thread of "religious" observances through the black web of his murders. In his confession he tells how, as he sat looking at the Frazers, father and son, he "prayed Almighty God to assist and enlighten him"; then, "feeling much strengthened," proceeded to murder both of them, killing each with a single blow of his tomahawk.

He buried the two bodies, remained at the camp all day, and next morning drove off with the team of his victims, and tried to sell it to a farmer named Mulligan, to whom he was known. Mulligan refused to purchase, and Lynch resolved to murder him. He relates how he prayed. "Almighty God, assist me and direct me what to do." After praying, he again "felt strengthened," and returned to the hut, bent on a dreadful purpose.

Mulligan's family consisted of himself, his wife, a boy of sixteen years of age, and a girl of fourteen; and even Lynch's ferocious heart for a moment failed him as he sat at the table eating the bread of his intended victims, and looking on that doomed circle of faces. He went away again, and "prayed to God to enlighten him," and at last "made up his mind to kill the lot." He inveigled the boy and the father, in turn, into the wood, and killed them, each with a single stroke of his tomahawk. He returned to the hut, persuaded the agitated wife and mother to "come outside," and slew her in the same fashion.

He re-entered the hut. The daughter, a girl of fourteen, her childish imagination pricked with strange fears by the coming and going of this mysterious

visitor, stood behind the table with a large butcher's knife in her hand, trembling violently. "Put down that knife," said Lynch sternly; and, as she hesitated, he shouted in yet louder tones, "Put down that knife." The trembling child put it down; her intending murderer walked round the table, took her hand, and told her to pray for her soul, as she had only ten minutes to live. The girl broke into hysterical sobs, and Lynch, in his confession, relates that he "tried to comfort her, talking very seriously, telling her that life is full of trouble, and that she would be better dead." Then he took the poor child into another room, outraged her, slew her with a single blow of his dreadful tomahawk, dragged the four bodies—father, mother, and children—together, heaped wood over them and set fire to the heap, and watched the flames. He had blotted out a whole family, and yet struck only four blows! Where in all the black literature of crime is to be found such another tale!

With incredible coolness Lynch stayed at the farm all next day; then he went to Sydney, and put an advertisement in the newspapers, signed John Mulligan, saying that, "Mrs. Mulligan having left her home without his consent, he would not be responsible for any debts she might contract." Lynch went back to the farm, took possession of it, and wrote letters signed with Mulligan's name to the tradespeople with whom the dead man had dealt, saying the farm had been sold to John Dunlevey. Under that alias Lynch actually held possession of the farm for six months, and might have held it permanently but for his incorrigible lust for murder.

He returned to Sydney, engaged a man named Landrigan as a labourer, found he had made a bad bargain, and resolved to terminate it by murder. He killed Landrigan and took his swag, but made what Lynch himself regarded as the fatal mistake of his career: he struck his victim twice! He was arrested for this murder, tried, and sentenced to death. When his amazing confession was published, the scenes of his various crimes were examined, and the remains of his victims discovered. At the time of his execution Lynch was only twenty-nine years of age. He was of fair complexion, with brown hair and hazel eyes, and, on the whole, a prepossessing look. And yet, as we have said, he was nothing but a Thug with a white skin and an Irish accent, who made of murder a religion.

CHAPTER II

FROM JACKY JACKY TO CAPTAIN MELVILLE

In sharpest contrast to the sinister and gloomy figure of "Pierce the Cannibal" is that of the bushranger Westwood, better known as "Jacky Jacky." He was English by birth, and was transported for some trivial offence when an errand boy, only sixteen years of age. This bright-faced, pleasant-mannered lad, quick-witted beyond the average, who might easily have been made a useful and successful citizen, landed in Sydney in 1837, and by the cruelty of the law, and the stupidity of its administrators, was quickly transfigured into a daring criminal and a murderer. But still through his boyish nature ran a strain of chivalry, a charm of manner and of wit, that made him immensely popular. Jacky Jacky's own surprising theory was that "if a man was a bushranger he ought still to be a gentleman," and he became famous as "the gentleman bushranger." All sorts of myths gathered about him, in the shape of stories which illustrated his gay spirit and his quick intelligence.

He was captured and sentenced to penal servitude for life. But it was difficult to hold in prison a spirit so daring. He was detected in an attempt to escape from Darlinghurst Gaol, and transferred to Cockatoo Island, from which, according to tradition, no convict

had escaped. Jacky Jacky, however, almost performed that impossible feat. He organised a conspiracy which took in twenty-five prisoners, who, at a given signal, seized and tied a warder, and then jumped into the bay, with the intention of swimming across three-quarters of a mile of sea, swarming with sharks, to Balmain. Somebody, however, had given away the plot; the water police suddenly made their appearance, and captured the entire swimming party.

Jacky Jacky was condemned, by way of punishment, to be sent to Port Arthur, and on the trip almost succeeded in capturing the brig that carried him. He made his escape from Port Arthur itself, was recaptured, and sent to Norfolk Island. Here the tragedy of his life reached its climax. Even his restless and fearless spirit, with his gay audacity, broke down under the monotonous and iron severity of Norfolk Island. Major Child, the new commandant, fretted the fierce spirits under his charge incessantly with fresh and intolerable restrictions, till at last despair led to revolt, and Jacky Jacky stepped out as leader. "Now, men," he said, "I have made up my mind to bear this oppression no longer, but, remember, I am going to the gallows. If any man funks, let him stand out; those who wish to follow me, come on."

Out of nearly 1800 prisoners, some 1600 followed Jacky Jacky. For some twenty thrilling minutes he simply ran amok. A sentry, the police overseer, the overseer of the works, and a warder, in turn, were met and killed. Then the crowd made a rush in the direction of Government House. A guard-hut, with two policemen, stood in the way. Jacky Jacky burst in

the door, and slew each constable, in turn, with a stroke of his axe. Then the flame of rage in him went suddenly out! It would be truer, perhaps, to say that he had accomplished the end of making his own execution certain, and was content. He preferred death, and any possible hell beyond death, to the human hell at Norfolk Island. He coolly drew aside from the crowd, lighted his pipe, and sat down.

The maddened convicts rushed on, but a slender line of red-coated soldiery by this time was stretched across their path, and the sight of the steady, levelled muskets checked the rush. Jacky Jacky, with other leaders, was sentenced to death, and executed on October 13, 1846. He was twenty-six years old when he died. He had the fair hair, the frank blue eyes, and the clear complexion of a typical English youth. In the whole literature of bushranging there is perhaps nothing more touching than a letter which he wrote from his condemned cell to a former chaplain. He writes, as he himself puts it, "as a dying man." There is the accent of sincerity in every syllable. He tells how, as a boy, while he yet hardly knew the responsibility of his acts, he found himself a convict and a slave. "The spirit of the British law," wrote this unhappy youth, waiting for the gallows, "is reformation. Years of sad experience should have told them that, instead of reforming, the wretched man, under the present system, led by example on the one hand, and driven by despair and tyranny on the other, goes from bad to worse, till at length he is ruined body and soul. . . . The crime for which I am to suffer is murder, but I only took life. Those that I deprived of life inflicted on many a

lingering death. . . . The burning fever of this life will soon be quenched, and my grave will be a haven, a resting-place for me. Out of the bitter cup of misery I have drunk, from my sixteenth year, ten long years. The sweetest draught is that which takes away the misery of a living death. It is the friend that deceives no man. All will then be quiet. No tyrant will there disturb my repose."

What can be said of a system which branded an English boy of sixteen as a convict, and in the brief space of ten years set him on the gallows with a rope about his neck, and such a message as the sentences we have quoted on his lips?

What was known as the Jewboy gang belongs to this period. Its leader was a convict named Davies. For nearly three years Davies, with a perpetually changing gang of confederates, rode and plundered over the whole range of country betwixt Maitland and the New England ranges. On one occasion he "rounded up" the chief constable of the district, who, with a party of policemen volunteers, had started in pursuit of him. According to the popular version of the story, he "yarded them like a mob of cattle, took their horses and arms, emptied their pockets, and rode away laughing." There was, it must be remembered, no regular police in those days. Each town had its own patrol of constables and watchmen, while in such towns as Sydney, Parramatta, &c., the police duty was discharged by soldiers.

Davies with his gang came to an end in December 1840. A gallant civilian named Day headed a party of soldiers, ran the bushrangers to earth at Murrurundi, and after a desperate fight captured the entire gang.

More than once in those wild days some gang of bushrangers, finding the field for their industry too limited, or the pursuit of the police too close, tried to capture some vessel, and so exchange bushranging for piracy, and scrub and forest for the wind-blown sea. Perhaps the most successful adventure of this sort was the seizure of the Government brig *Cyprus*, in 1829. She left Hobart for Macquarie Harbour, having on board thirty-three convicts, a crew of twelve seamen, and a guard of soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant Carew, with some women and children. The brig anchored in Research Bay, and the lieutenant, the doctor, and a soldier, with three convicts, put off in a boat to fish. Suddenly they heard the sound of shots on board the brig, and saw on its deck a tumult of wrestling figures. The convicts had risen!

The boat pulled hurriedly back to the ship, and Carew tried to climb on board, but was stopped by a levelled musket in the hands of a convict. It turned out that some convicts, heavily ironed, who had been allowed to come on deck, found that only the captain and a couple of soldiers were on guard. They made a rush, knocked them down, closed the hatches, and imprisoned the soldiers below. Carew begged that they would give him his wife and children. These were passed into the boat, with a couple of soldiers. In another boat, the captain, the doctor, the remaining soldiers, and the crew were rowed to an island and landed. Seventeen of the convicts shrank from the peril of a voyage under amateur navigators into unknown latitudes, and elected to land; but sixteen, to an accompaniment of wild cheers, sailed off with the

brig. At the last moment, one of the sixteen leaped overboard and joined the marooned party, and afterwards received a free pardon for the feat.

The brig disappeared beyond the sea-horizon, and was supposed to have been lost. Nearly a year afterwards, however, a ship's boat with three men on board rowed into Canton Harbour; the men reported themselves to be the survivors of the crew of the brig *Edward* that had been wrecked. They were sent to England. A few days afterwards another boat with three men on board arrived at Wampoah; they declared they, too, were the survivors of the crew of the *Edward*, but gave a totally different account of its wreck, and of the name of its captain, &c. They were, as a matter of fact, members of the party who had seized the *Cyprus*, but failed to agree in their story. They, in turn, were sent to England. Both parties, in due course, were carried to Australia, tried for piracy, and hanged.

The most daring experiment in the way of piracy was the attempt to seize H.M. brig the *Governor Phillip*, in 1842. The brig was lying off the shore at Norfolk Island, discharging cargo and taking in ballast, and some of the convicts employed in stowing the ballast formed a plot to seize her. At a signal they knocked down two of the sentries, threw a third overboard, seriously wounded the sergeant of the guard, and fastened down the hatches on the remainder of the soldiers. Lucas, the second mate, who was on deck, had been beaten into insensibility with belaying-pins. He rallied, however, and managed to creep to the captain's cabin, and told his tale.

Captain Boyle's Irish blood took fire. A gang of

convicts to seize his ship!—the King's ship! He broke his way into the men's quarters, but found crew and soldiers with scanty inclination to fight. The angry captain compelled the carpenter to cut away a piece of the hatchway, seized a musket from a soldier, thrust it through the hole in the wood, and shot one of the convicts. McLean, the leader of the plot, on this came to the hatchway, and shouted to Boyle that if he would consent to leave the brig, the crew and the soldiers would all be put ashore. Boyle refused, with a wrathful expletive. When told to give up his arms, his reply was a shot which killed McLean. This left the convicts without a leader. Boyle then forced the hatchway open, broke his way through to the deck, his broad face red with fury, and swept the convicts before him with his rush. The brig had been in possession of the would-be pirates just fifteen minutes.

Martin Cash belongs to this period, and since he has written—or somebody else has written for him—the story of his adventures, he is perhaps the best known of all the Tasmanian bushrangers. Cash was of Irish birth, with rich relations, and was only eighteen years old when, in 1827, he arrived at Botany Bay, under a sentence of seven years, having been convicted of an attempt at murder. He was a man of fair education, of dauntless courage and quick wit, and his career as a bushranger is a very curious story. He won by good conduct a ticket-of-leave, and, later, his full liberty; became a stock-owner in a small way; was entangled in some business of stolen cattle, and fled, taking with him, as "Mrs. Cash," a woman who had no title to that name, but who played an evil part in his history. Cash

reached Tasmania, drifted into criminal life, was sentenced to a new term of seven years at one of the penal settlements, and escaped from it the day after his arrival there. Cash's escapes from prison, indeed, are the astonishing feature of his career. He could have given Baron Trenck lessons in the art. He was quickly recaptured, and put under very strict guard, being leg-ironed heavily, and placed in a barracks surrounded by a stockade twelve feet high.

Cash broke his irons, climbed the stockade, and got clear, rejoining "Mrs. Cash" at Campbelltown. He retained his freedom for a year, was again recaptured, and sent to Port Arthur. But even that gloomy and thrice-guarded prison could not hold him. Passion hurried him, indeed, into a wild and hasty dash for liberty, which failed. He knocked down a brutal overseer, threw him into Long Bay, hid himself for a night and a day in the bush, swam the inlet at Eaglehawk Neck, but was recaptured, almost dead with hunger, and sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour in chains. But, later, Cash framed a cool and daring plan of escape which succeeded.

Two convicts joined in the plot, and after adventures which, if told in detail, might fill a volume, the three men succeeded in swimming the inlet and landing stark naked on the further shore. With feet bloody from the sharp stones, and naked flesh torn by the scrub, they made their way to one of the police huts. Only the cook happened to be in it, and his terror may be imagined when three naked men, their bodies scribbled over with bloody hieroglyphics, broke into the hut. The three equipped themselves with clothes and food,

crept through the remaining lines of sentries, and, evading all their pursuers, got safely to the mainland. "If I had a crown of gold," said one of the three, in a transport of astonished delight to Cash, "I would give it to you."

The three then plunged into the business of bushranging. They carried it on, indeed, in a very business-like fashion, under the title of "Messrs. Cash & Co." After Cash had been captured, one of the party carried on the bushranging business, and was accustomed to describe himself, in commercial phraseology, as "Formerly with Cash & Co." "Mrs. Cash" had been by this time arrested, whereupon Cash wrote to Sir John Franklin the following letter: "Messrs. Cash & Co. beg to notify His Excellency Sir John Franklin and his satellites that a very respectable person named Mrs. Cash is now falsely imprisoned in Hobart Town, and if the said Mrs. Cash is not released forthwith, and properly remunerated, we will, in the first instance, visit Government House, and, beginning with Sir John, administer a wholesome lesson in the shape of a sound flogging; after which we will pay the same currency to all his followers. Given under our hands, this day, at the residence of Mr. Kerr, of Dunrobin.—Cash, Kavanagh, Jones. His Excellency the Governor."

Cash was captured while on a reckless visit to "Mrs. Cash," but his arrest was a very desperate business. He wounded one of his pursuers, shot dead a constable named Winstanley, who tried to seize him, and with a third shot brought down a civilian who was assisting the police. Cash was sentenced to death for the murder of the constable; but, somehow, the sentence was

commuted to transportation for life to Norfolk Island. The most remarkable of all Cash's escapes, indeed, was his escape from the gallows.

In the famous rising of the convicts at Norfolk Island, under the leadership of Jacky Jacky, Cash refused to take any part, and for this the remainder of his sentence was remitted. This versatile Irishman, having spent so much time and energy in breaking the law, now became its zealous servant. He held for a time the office of constable, then became caretaker of the Government Gardens in Hobart, went to New Zealand, made money; and finally spent a peaceful—if not quite venerable—old age on his own farm at Glenorchy, near Hobart.

"Captain" Melville comes a little later than Martin Cash; and his style and method, and the accident that the goldfields were the chief centre of his robberies, give him a modern, not to say indigenous look. But he, too, belonged to the old school of bushrangers, and represents crime of the imported variety. Popular tradition credits him with being of aristocratic birth, the captain of a ship whose crew absconded to the diggings. Melville, however, was a convict who, under the name of M'Callum, arrived in Tasmania about 1838. A few years later he absconded from a road gang, took to the bush, and after a brief career was captured, tried, and sentenced to death. On the plea of his youth Melville was let off with imprisonment for life, and sent to Port Arthur. In that cruel and evil school he spent seven years, and that he brought from it any strain of the gay, reckless spirit—flavoured with a certain rough chivalry—which afterwards distinguished

him, is a proof that his character had in it some fine possibilities.

In Victoria, Melville committed many daring robberies, amongst others "holding-up" a station near Wardy-yallock, and, with a single mate, tying up and robbing a whole party of shearers, eighteen strong. Melville's arrest was of a sensational sort. He had committed many robberies on the roads betwixt Geelong and the diggings, and had the daring to visit Geelong itself and take part in a "spree" there. He was sitting at a table in this house when two constables entered. Melville leaped to his feet, with a revolver in either hand, and, covering the police, held them at bay till, slipping along the table, he reached the door, flung it open, and dashed into the street. He ran like a deer along the pavement, till on the road which crossed what was at that time known as "the Dam" he saw a young fellow riding a fine horse. A horse was Melville's chief need at that moment, and, running up, a pistol in one hand, he caught the astonished rider with the other, and proceeded to drag him from his steed. The young fellow struggled desperately; a policeman who, by chance, was near, naturally interfered, and, coming behind Melville, caught him by the throat. Melville flung round his hand, and fired across his shoulder at the constable, with no worse result than that of shattering the baton he held. The struggling figures, the sound of the shot, quickly drew a crowd, and Melville was captured, but not till the handcuffs were on his wrists did the delighted police know what a prize they had won. The court was sitting at the time; Melville was at once put on his trial, convicted of many acts of

highway robbery, and sentenced to thirty-two years' imprisonment.

It is the after-career of Melville which gave his name a tragical and long-enduring interest. He received his terrible sentence in 1852, spent several years afterwards in the hulks, then was transferred to the quarries at Point Gellibrand. It is a proof of Melville's versatility that while in the hulks, or the quarries, under conditions of life and toil so cruel, he translated the Bible—or part of it—into the language of some aboriginal tribe, which, it seems, he was able to speak fluently. Some strange and unwritten experiences lie behind that familiarity with the language of a tribe of blackfellows.

In 1856 a desperate attempt to escape from the hulks in Hobson's Bay was made. A launch, crowded with convicts, was being towed from the hulks to the quarries; suddenly the convicts seized the tow-rope, pulled the launch which carried them up to the towing-boat, and leaped into it. The guards were thrown into the water, the unfortunate corporal's skull was smashed, the towing-rope was thrown off, the head of the boat swung round, and the convicts pulled off down the bay; Melville standing up shouting "Good-bye to Victoria," and waving the hammer with which it is said the corporal of the guard had been killed. The boat swept past the prison-hulk under musketry fire, but unhurt. Escape, however, was hopeless; the boats of the water-police quickly overtook the convicts, and made them prisoners again.

Nine of the convicts were tried for mutiny; Melville, at his own request, being placed first at the

bar alone, was found guilty of the murder of Corporal Owens. Popular opinion, however, was angrily suspicious of the administration of the hulks, and, as a result, Melville's sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, the second time such a sentence had been inflicted upon him. "Well," said Melville, when told of this, "you will be sorry for it."

A year after came the murder of Price, Inspector-General, in the quarries near Williamstown. Price had a reputation for firmness, which—whether deservedly or not—was suspected of lapsing easily and often into cruelty. He was visiting the quarries for the purpose of hearing any complaints the convicts might make. One prisoner, named Kelly, asked for a ticket-of-leave, and Price refused his request. As he walked away, Kelly was heard to mutter, "Bloody tyrant, your race is nearly run." The convicts had, just then, crowded round Price. A wave of passion swept through them; they saw before them the man they hated. Someone threw a stone at him, a rush was made, and Price was struck down with a heavy shovel. Murder was let loose; there was a tumult of wild sounds, a kaleidoscopic dance of evil faces. When the guard came running up, the convicts had placed the unhappy Price's body, mangled indescribably with wounds, on a hand-barrow, and they held it up in silence—a dreadful signal of accomplished vengeance.

The convicts were hurried back to the hulk *Success*. But tidings of the murder were shouted across to the sister-hulk, *Lysander*, and one prison ship answered the other for many minutes with mad cheers. A defence vessel in the harbour, the *Victoria*, drew

up alongside the *Success* with shotted guns, and men at quarters ready for action. Fifteen convicts were tried for this murder; the first three were found guilty, but the jury refused to convict the second batch, amongst them being Kelly, who led the assault on Price.

Melville was believed by everybody to have planned this outbreak. That he did not actually lead it was only due to the fact that he had been removed from the hulk a few days before it took place. He was in the Melbourne Gaol, and on July 28, 1857—only four months after the murder of Price—he made an attack on Mr. Wintle, the governor of the gaol. A few weeks later he was found dead in his cell, self-strangled, a handkerchief with a slip-knot being twisted round his throat. It is a proof of the impression Melville made on the imagination of certain classes, at least, that to this day many believe he was strangled by his gaolers, as a method of getting rid of a criminal whose daring and recklessness made him a terror. Melville was still a young man—not thirty-five years of age—when his wild and tragical career ended.

The robbery of the *Nelson* and the sticking-up of the Melvor escort both belong to this period, but each was the work of what we have called imported criminals. The *Nelson* was a ship lying in Hobson's Bay, off what was known as Liardet's Beach, not far from where the St. Kilda pier now stands. She was almost ready to sail for London, and carried in her strong-room twenty-three boxes of gold—8183 ounces in all, in value over £30,000. On the night of April 1, 1851, she was in charge of the mate, with three seamen

and the cook. Three passengers were also on board, and the mate in charge had, as a visitor, the second officer of another ship lying near. There may have been an anchor watch on board, but, if so, the seaman was asleep. At two o'clock in the morning a couple of boats rowed with muffled oars to the side of the *Nelson;* they were crowded with men, who clambered noiselessly on board. Mates, seamen, and passengers were seized and lashed to the bulwarks. The leader of the party then untied the mate, and bade him show where the gold was. In spite of the levelled pistol the brave fellow refused, whereupon the leader of the gang fired at him, wounding him in the side. The pistol was reloaded, and levelled again at the unfortunate officer's head, while another of the gang pricked his flesh with a sword. The mate then yielded, led the way to the lazarette, and saw the gold carried off. The seamen and the passengers were thrust into the lazarette, and nailed in with strong planks, while the robbers pushed off with their booty. This was the most daring and successful robbery of that time, and created a great sensation. Two of the criminals were captured almost by chance; they were well-known bushrangers, and received a sentence of fifteen years' hard labour. But the rest of the gang, with their huge booty, escaped.

The sticking-up of the McIvor gold escort took place in Victoria the same year. It was a private escort, collecting the gold on the McIvor field, and joining the Government escort, which ran from Bendigo to Melbourne, at Kyneton. The robbery was cleverly planned. The road from the McIvor diggings ran, at

one stage, through broken and rocky country at the base of a steep range. The bushrangers chose a spot where the road curved round a little splinter of rock that jutted like the head of a spear from the flank of the hill. On the point of this "spear" they erected what looked like a mia-mia, a hut made of branches by the blacks; across the road opposite to it the trunk of a tree was dragged, leaving a narrow track along which the escort must defile. The log was meant to thrust the cart carrying the gold under the very guns of the bushrangers who lay concealed in the mia-mia.

Three troopers rode beside the driver in the cart carrying the gold. Mr. Warner, in charge of the escort, with a sergeant of the troopers, rode a little ahead, two troopers brought up the rear. The road seemed lonely, not a sound stirred amongst the rocks. The troopers rode on in the heat, nodding half asleep in their saddles, and wholly unsuspicious; when, just as the cart, jolting over the rocks, passed the mia-mia, half a dozen red flashes broke through the leaves. It was a musketry volley; the driver fell, mortally wounded, the horses of Mr. Warner and the sergeant were shot. The attack was so sudden, the surprise so complete, that the troopers got out of hand. They shot confusedly in the direction from which the bullets were flying, but the bushrangers, lying concealed, kept up a deadly fire. Three of the troopers were by this time wounded; the cart, with its golden freight, was abandoned. Then the bushrangers, leaping from behind their screen of leaves, dragged the boxes of gold from the cart, and disappeared with them in the scrub. When, presently, the surviving troopers, with some

recruits they had hurriedly gathered, came back to the scene, nothing was in sight but the empty cart, beside it a man lifting a wounded trooper into it. He was promptly arrested as being one of the robbers, but was, in fact, a quite innocent traveller, who, coming upon the astonishing spectacle of an empty cart, a couple of dead horses, and three wounded troopers, was trying to help. The robbers carried off £5000 worth of gold dust — and it was never recovered.

The story of the detection of some of the performers in this wild drama is told by W. Craig, in his book, *My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields.* There were six men concerned in the robbery. Gray, the master-spirit of the gang, having secured his share of the stolen gold, disappeared beyond the horizon, and nothing more was heard of him. Tradition says that he was hidden on board the ill-fated *Madagascar*, and sailed with her to a mysterious doom. Wilson, another member of the gang, had taken his passage in the *Madagascar*. The police visited the ship in search of ticket-of-leave men; but Wilson, cleverly disguised, escaped notice. After the police-boat had pushed off, in his exultation he drank freely, quarrelled with a fellow-passenger, and drew a revolver upon him. The water-police were signalled for, and on their boat coming up, Wilson was handcuffed and transferred to it. In his half-drunken condition, Wilson believed he had been betrayed by a comrade, and determined on revenge. He asked the officer in charge of the police-boat to pull alongside a barque lying at anchor, about to sail for Mauritius. He shouted from the boat at the

top of his voice the name of "George Melville." The owner of that name put his face over the bulwarks, and Wilson roared at him that he was "copped," and begged him to look after his wife.

The police-inspector had pricked up his ears at the name of "Melville." This was the name of one of the gang that robbed the escort, and the inspector held a warrant for his arrest. He sprang on board the barque, promptly handcuffed Melville, and put him in the boat beside Wilson. The other members of the gang were arrested on information supplied by this pair, and three of the four thus captured were convicted and hanged, Wilson and Melville being two.

A tragical mystery hangs round the fate of the *Madagascar*. She was a fine ship, loaded with wool, and carrying £60,000 in gold, with a number of lucky diggers as passengers. But she had also on board many criminals, including, it was afterwards found, some of the gang that had robbed the *Nelson*. The ill-fated *Madagascar* was never heard of after she had sailed out of Port Phillip Heads; but Craig gives good evidence in support of the theory that she was seized by the criminals on board, who shot down the captain and officers, scuttled the ship, and sailed off in the long-boat with the treasure she carried.

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